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This, the last number of the First Year

of Story

Is dedicated to Eugene Jolas

editor of transition

who once said

Let each creation be an act

of faith.

The Editors

Vienna

1931.

SHEPHERD OF THE LORD

by

Peter Neagoé

The Lord has many sheep. Through the mouth of his chosen ones He commanded them to go and multiply like the sands of the seas. They are multiplying . . .

Popa Anghel Boyer is shepherd of the Lord, a strong man Popa Anghel. The peasants rise when he passes and the women kiss his large hand; the left hand pats the young woman's cheek as she bends her forehead on his right hand. The old he blesses, laying a heavy blessing hand on their bent head. Popa Anghel's boots are shiny and squeak proudly as the shepherd stamps along the street. When there is a wind his long moustaches are flowing streamers, black and shiny. But his spade-shaped beard, large and thick, flattens like an armour-plate against his heavy chest. His long locks fall in curls over a neck round and strong as a tree-trunk. The wide, muscle-padded shoulders carry easily Popa Anghel's head.

Popa Anghel handles his four oxen with easy grace. The grace of power. Shouting to the heavy, long-horned animals keeps his voice alive. He sings in church and the saints on the windows tremble. He booms his sermons upon his congregation, and his words like waves against the breasts of the faithful. The candle flames stretch and shrink, waver and blink when Popa Anghel booms his sermons in the house of the Lord.

Popa Anghel's wife (priestess Andronica, the peasants call her) is wide-hipped, tall, full-chested. Generous breasts tremble maternally on her full chest when Andronica laughs. Her face and eyes laugh together and the breasts rock in unison. Her skin is smooth as velvet, and her hands white and plump, her voice molten honey. A sweetly fragrant burden in Popa Anghel's powerful arms. "You crush my bones, you holy bear," she pants as Popa Anghel holds her, his face against her white throat.

The house is large, the beds are fields of linen and virgin wool. Sweet mint and incense permeate the air of their nest. Popa Anghel's and Andronica's nest.

Popa Anghel has cattle, large-flanked, sleek and strong. Cows, oxen, horses, a bull and a stallion. For in animals the shepherd of the Lord favors the male, in his own species he loves the female.

Popa Anghel has two daughters, Elisabeth and Maria. Priests' wives and daughters are splendid females. The Transylvanian peasant has good eyes. "She could marry a priest," he says of a beautiful girl. Elisabeth was seventeen then and Maria fourteen. Elisabeth was not a big girl, but she was plump, feeding on hallowed bread, honey and milk, and her skin was rosy and smooth. Her voice was full and her laughter rippled. The smell of ripe fruit, and her skirt was always snow white. The colorful aprons she wore had choice designs. The sleeves of her shirt were very full and puffed out from the shoulder to the wrists, where they gathered in an embroidered band, to emerge again in ruffled cuffs. But the wristband was loose and when Elisabeth lifted her arms the sleeves fell back to her very shoulders, a wreath of whiteness from which emerged the pink arms. But Maria was my friend. She was fourteen and I fifteen. Here my story starts.

Popa Anghel's store barns are veritable labyrinths. The fragrance of hay and straw seeped into the store. Even the dust

in Popa Anghel's barns is scented. Elisabeth, Maria, myself and two or three village boys played at hide-and-seek there during two of my summer vacations. I hid in the hay, dug myself into the straw and flattened out in some cosy corner. To be found by Maria was the greatest pleasure of my heart. By the time she came upon me, Maria was exhausted, had to rest. She would sit down close to me; I would touch her cool arm in the darkness of our hiding place. At such times we talked in whispers, close to each other, and Maria's breath was sweeter than the fragrance of ripe straw. She often bent so close to my face that the ringlets of her black hair touched my face.

It was the time when I began to feel that girls are very splendid creatures, Maria their queen. The mere sight of Maria, walking across the yard, her apron flaring, released such a flow of life in me that I could have jumped over the house or lifted one of the oxen on my back. When we walked side by side, our hands coming together, our fingers timidly embracing, there was a splendor on every object. My eyes were keen as eagles. The merest sounds were music. The immense mystery of life gushed through everything.

We loved the brook in which we waded — Maria's feet gleaming pink on the shimmering pebbles of its bed, and the water gurgling in its rush. We smiled upon the flowers in the fields and threw ourselves upon the warm ground inhaling the cool scent of the grass we crushed with our bodies. We loved the sparrows which stole kernels from the sheaves stored in the barn. We loved them as we loved the stars and even God, who, we knew, was up in the sky, seeing everything that happened on the earth.

But we knew, Maria and I, that we were the very core of everything, and God looked upon us from above, with grace and love. He was our father.

Maria referred to her own father as Popa Anghel, because the villagers called him so. Maria feared Popa Anghel more than she feared God, because this powerful man lorded over his family with great zest. He was so fond of practical jokes, that in church he swung the incense-chalice, filled with glowing embers, dangerously near to the mayor's nose. But everybody knew the mayor to be a miser and a tyrant despite the great piety he showed on Sundays.

In his gold-embroidered priestly garb Popa Anghel looked very big. He smacked the bundle of sweet mint, soaked in holy water, on the heads of his parishioners with great relish. He kept a serious face, but his spade-shaped black beard seemed to laugh as it spread over the shimmering surplice. Often his large moustache pushed out from under his nose as if mocking at some one, just when Popa Anghel raised his hand, with two fingers closed, the other three symbolizing the holy trinity.

I noticed that when young women kissed Popa Anghel's hand he would press it against their lips, before they could bow their forehead upon it as the custom is. When he prayed over some young widow whose husband had been taken by the Lord, his hand would caress the woman's cheeks as he adjusted his peplum over her head. But he uttered his prayer in clear words, in a soothing sing-song, so the woman was comforted and left the shelter of the holy peplum refreshed, but with flushed cheeks.

But Popa Anghel did not like the mayor, nor could he bear the mayor's son, a tall square-shouldered young man of twenty, who followed Elisabeth everywhere. This young man, Jacob, was dark and sombre of looks, but he smiled so ingratiatingly that mothers of marriageable girls sighed and shook their heads when he did so. But Jacob had no eyes for other girls; only for Elisabeth. Now I have learned some things — since those days — so I know that Elisabeth was a great beauty.

Elisabeth was of such grace that even old men turned to look upon her when she passed them in the street. And she had a way of changing the expression of her violet-blue eyes from coldest haughtiness to a melting warmth which nobody could resist. That is why Jacob could not live a day without seeing her. For this reason he became great friends with me. Passing Popa Anghel's, he would drop in to call me with every kind of pretext. One time to show me a thrush he caught that very morning, another time to give me a new sheath for my belt knife, but more often to ask me into the fields to help him at some work, which I always loved to do.

I was flattered by Jacob's friendship, because he was stronger than the other peasants and the best wrestler in the village, not to mention his dancing. Every girl in the village loved to dance the reel with him. In the first slow steps of this old dance the man barely touches the waist of the two girls — his dancing partners — while moving slowly to the right and to the left, he improvises in rhyme. A satire on some one or some commonly known event, but more often the man chants out in verse his heart's yearning. Decided skill is needed to do this, for lacking that, the poor man will only betray his feelings, to the amusement of the assembly. Jacob had remarkable skill for this kind of improvising He sang his praises to his adored one, comparing her to the moon — queen of the stars; to the sun — whose light and warmth is our life; placing himself, the adorer, in a sad or happy relation to the symbol of his worship, according to the condition of his heart at the time.

Everybody listened to Jacob's rhyming, and mothers of lovely girls attributed his affection to their own daughters. Each one secretly, of course. And many of the girls blushed and blinked to hide a tear. But I knew to whom Jacob was singing. I did not even have to look at Elisabeth to know it. And

Elisabeth never betrayed her feelings to anybody but myself and to me only by her occasional glances. Her big violet-blue eyes remained otherwise screened by their long black lashes.

My admiration for Jacob was especially strong because he could handle a long whip with uncanny skill. He could crack the whip so it sounded like a pistol shot, and by lashing it back and forth, without once striking the ground, he produced with it a succession of reports like the exploding of fire-crackers. But what mostly amazed one was the manner in which he would strike down a fruit from the tree. He swung the whip around, then, with a quick jerk of the hand, lashed the stem of the fruit, and brought it to the ground.

In a whip duel he always disarmed his opponent. With frowning eyes he watched for the favoring moment, and lashed the whip-handle of his adversary, with a jerk, out of his adversary's hand.

Jacob was very generous towards me. He gave me his finest whip, thick as my wrist at the handle, tapering so gently towards the lash that it became twelve feet in length. Jacob had pleated the whip himself, in four strands of white hemp, strong and shining as silk. The handle was hickory, smooth as polished ivory on the upper end but rough, for a better hold, at the base.

Under Jacob's rigorous tutoring, I succeeded after four weeks in managing the splendid weapon as well as Jacob. So well in fact did I handle the whip, that one day I strangled a crow with it. The poor bird stood perched on a lump of sod in a newly ploughed field, its beak in the air and the head tilted to one side. I aimed at the bird's neck. The deadly lash coiled round it with a snap, and the bird fell over with its beak wide open.

It may have been mere chance, but Jacob praised me for the accuracy of my aim and I felt prouder than Caesar.

Jacob could sing well, in a clear tenor. My voice had broken already and was settling in a deep baritone. Jacob taught me many folk-songs. On evenings we walked up and down the village main street, singing in duet.

On a warm night in August Jacob gathered six or seven young peasants and we went in front of Popa Anghel's house. It was dark but the air was full of the fragrance of the fields. We sat down under the locust tree and began singing. Softly, sadly, an endless tune. Occasionally a breeze would stir the foliage, rendering even more sad the melancholy monotone of our song.

I became sadder and sadder under the influence of the night and the never-ending song. At length I burst into crying. Jacob, near whom I was seated, put his arm around my shoulders. My crying became a real lament, for with tears in my voice I kept my place with the singers. Suddenly Jacob's voice broke also; then the other fellows' voices caught and the chorus sounded like a group of mourners.

How long we kept up our wailing no one could tell, but a rude shock, a terrific donkey-braying came suddenly, cutting into our lamentation. This unholy braying poured down upon us from one of the windows in the priest's house. We stopped instantly. We could see nothing, but all guessed that it must be Popa Anghel himself, who, indeed, it was. For, after his ghastly braying, the priest thundered out in his booming voice:

"Phiu Satan, may the holy cross kill you! Go back, devil, unto the flaming bowels of hell! Don't disturb the peace of one anointed unto the Lord!"

We crawled off softly on all fours. Once in the street we took natural positions again and ran away on tip-toes.

Maria told me on the morning that both she and Elisabeth had heard us and cried until their pillows were soaked with

tears. Only later she told me that when they heard the braying of their father they got cramps from laughing.

Being at Popa Anghel's, I saw everything that came to pass there. But the peasants say: "It is easier to watch a herd of rabbits than a woman in love." This is gospel truth. I never noticed anything about Elisabeth until one day, going into the barn, I saw something. But what I saw shall never pass my lips. I am honor-bound never to tell a soul. Elisabeth made me swear and then kissed me and pressed me to her heart. For the kiss alone and for her embrace I would keep the secret eternally, not to mention Elisabeth's violet-blue eyes, as they implored.

In the Spring, soon after Easter, Popa Anghel married his daughter Elisabeth to the school teacher. A very handsome young man, with curly black hair, so genuinely patriotic that even now he wears the Roumanian garb on Sundays.

When I arrived in the Summer Elisabeth was marvelously beautiful. She was not as rosy of color as before, but a heavenly light shone in her eyes. She was loved, and the peasants said, "Her husband carries her about on his palms." The school teacher was an ardent lover indeed, for Elisabeth seemed to have forgotten Jacob, who was in the army. When he came for two weeks leave in August, Jacob only spoke of books. He never mentioned his love. Before we parted he said: "When I come back from service, I will go into the mountains to herd our sheep. Don't you see, Peter, the village is so small. It is sad, so small it is."

I soon forgot my sorrow for Jacob, because to me the village was a gay song, for Maria was there.

We were big enough — Maria and I — to take our amusements otherwise than children, but we did not. We ran about in bare feet, climbed trees, played in the barn and wandered

in the woods. What we both enjoyed most was to swing in the barn. The swing was made of two heavy ropes attached to the very peak of the barn roof. Usually I sat on the board of the swing while Maria, standing facing me, drove it by bending from the knees and straightening up with a push. We often touched the edge of the roof on both sides. When we swung so fast Maria's skirts flared, catching my head in their folds, and she laughed so much at this that she had to ease her swinging. I was never sorry for that, because then I could tickle her knee, and the smooth spot right in the back of it. All she could do was to wriggle with strident shouts of laughter. When we heard the tramping of Popa Anghel in the yard we quickly slid off the swing and disappeared in the hay.

But on this last summer of my stay at Popa Anghel's the skies of my happiness began to cloud. Maria grew too fast. She had passed fifteen and was one inch taller than myself. This was terrible enough in itself, but Maria made it worse. She adopted a protective air toward me — like a big sister managing a frail brother. I had to resort to cunning and the privileges of my sex to offset Maria's patronising. And often I did it at the expense of my feelings.

One of the things I did was — when the horse was needed in the fields — to mount the horse, bareback, and ride proudly through the gate opened for me by Maria. In the street I set the horse trotting, then goaded him to a clumsy gallop, knowing that Maria was watching and envying me. She could ride the horse as well as I could (she insisted that she did it better, but I never believed her) but the horse was round as a barrel and too much of Maria's bare legs showed from under her skirts for Andronica's approval. Once she had tears in her eyes when she pointed to my trousers saying, "It is easy for you, in those ugly things." She threw a twig at my head as I trotted

out of the yard, haha-ing her. Another time she swished a handful of nettles between the horse's legs and I had to flatten out on him and hold onto his mane. Maria shrieked with joy. Arriving in the fields, I worked with the peasants. At noon Maria and two women came with baskets of food. On such occasions Maria never failed to ask me, even coax me, to go back with her and take my luncheon with the family. Of course I refused, spending a miserable day thinking of her.

But I wanted to show Maria my independence; to show her how easily I disposed of her company. In truth, however, neither the flushed faces of the working girls nor the movements of their bodies (clad only in a full linen shirt with a belt and two aprons) consoled me. In fact their laughing and singing increased my longing for Maria.

At first this stratagem of mine worked very well. Maria told me that the day was much too long for her without me. But Maria was much more clever than I thought. Soon she came to consider my behavior as a childish caprice and told me to my face that I was not as smart as I imagined. I had to look for other means to promote my superiority. An opportunity came. Being wealthy, Popa Anghel had a bull and a stallion. They were used for breeding the cows and mares of the villagers. Popa Anghel called the stallion Nestor. No one but himself was allowed to exercise Nestor. Daily, Popa Anghel would lead the splendid animal into the yard. A heavy, pleated halter on the stallion's head and a long rope attached to it were the only means of control used by the priest. Nestor had flaming eyes, a long tail and a wealth of mane. As soon as he came into the yard he let out a terrific neighing, arched his neck, whipped his tail and began prancing. The priest gave him rope, turning on his trunk-like legs in the centre of a circle formed by the galloping stallion. Nestor's body was steel

grey. It shone like polished metal. His black tail and mane flared with his movements. His hoofs, slender, high, trimmed and carefully filed, were like ivory. He had a way of picking up his feet as if the ground were red hot. His thin ankles were springs of steel. Popa Anghel, in his thick, gurgling voice, would talk adoringly to Nestor. "There, beauty, there, my brave one, limber up your limbs. Now, now! Not so rough, my hero; there are no devils here. You can beat the very devil, my boy. So you can, my beauty."

The spade-shaped beard bobbed up and down on the priest's chest as he spoke.

Popa Anghel loved fecundity. Nestor and the bull were to him symbols of male power and fructifying force. He would caress the bull's flanks, press his face against the shining hide and inhale deeply its odor. The bull would roll his eyes with animal wonderment and stretch his enormous neck. Lifting his massive head, he released from the depths of his huge body trombone-like sounds. The priest laughed, answering: "Yes, my boy, sure — just as you say," and slapped the bull's belly.

There was a small yard in back of the barns. Wall-enclosed, Nestor and the bull performed their fructifying duties there. Popa Anghel assisted with ritual officiousness, talking admiringly, encouragingly, to Nestor or the bull, as the occasion required, one or the other. But as soon as a peasant came, with cow or mare, the priest boomed out his order that all female folk retire into the house. "Maria — there girl — get in! What are you gaping at, your mouth open as the barn door? Run in to your mother." Maria had to run into the house at once. But she looked at me enviously and angrily, because I could stay in the yard until the animal was led through the barn gates into the — sanctum — there I was not allowed to enter.

But, reconnoitering in the barn loft, I had found a square

ventilator, way up near the roof. It was large enough for me to squeeze through, so that without being seen from the yard below I could watch the ceremony. So one day when I saw the mayor come with his roan, I sneaked into the barn. Nobody had seen me. I heard Popa Anghel talking to the mayor. Then he told him to lead in the animal. "In there, you know," he shouted, adding, "she's a fine one, your mare."

I clambered to my post of vantage. Soon I heard Nestor's tramping on the barn floor. I looked down. The mayor was holding his animal by the bridle.

"Tie her to that post, man! Get away! Want your bones crushed?" shouted the priest. Hurriedly the man wound the rope around the post, slipped it through an iron ring and knotted it. Then he ran along the wall into the barn.

Seeing the mare, Nestor let out a piercing neigh and reared on his hind legs. He pushed his tail out straight, then he whipped it so it hissed. The mare flattened her ears, neighing and dancing. Popa Anghel gave rope to the stallion, dodging him. "Not too rough, my hero; gently, my boy! Now you devil, don't murder her," he shouted. Nestor was biting the mare's neck, rearing up and away when neighingly she snapped back at him. Then he pawed the ground, snorting furiously. I heard a noise under his belly as of a club beating on a kettle-drum. Bam, bam, bam, it went, Nestor pawing and snorting. The priest's spade-shaped beard danced on his chest, a thick laugh rumbling out of him.

"Back there!" he yelled to the villager, who sidled nearer to the scene.

Nestor reared up. His front legs gripped the mare's flanks. The mare danced and neighed — ears flattened — snapping at the stallion's head, as he mouthed her mane with outstretched lips. Suddenly, resting his whole weight against the mare's

body, the stallion set to pummeling her with his front legs. I feared the savage animal would kill the poor mare, who was being sacrificed to his ferocious passion.

"His little love play," grunted the priest over his shoulder to the villager. Now the "love play" stopped. For one instant both animals were still; then I saw Nestor's huge body well up, like a menacing swell, from rump to neck.

"Aha — my hero," said Popa Anghel.

Leaving my peep-hole, I slid from the straw into the hay, fifteen feet below, where I sank up to my shoulders. I stood there awaiting my breath before trying to crawl out, when I heard something stirring in the hay — quite close to me. I listened. Someone was crawling towards me. Then I heard Maria's voice whispering: "I saw you."

"Very well, if you did," I answered as softly.

"Where have you been?" she added, very close to me.

"Up there."

"Up where?"

"There, on top of the straw." I pointed.

"Just so? What were you doing there?" Maria insisted.

"I? What should I do? Climbed on the straw!"

"To see what?"

"To see? What should I see there? It is dark on top there."

"There is a shaft of light; I saw it from. . . ." She pointed back.

"Yes! Well, there is a bit of light coming in," I admitted.

"One can look down there," she pointed towards the back of the barn.

"Maybe."

"Did you look?" Maria put her mouth close to my ear. This irritated me. She was too insistent and had a manner of questioning which I could not dodge.

"Yes, I did, if you want to know," I answered brusquely.

"You did —? Well —. If father knew that!"

She certainly was exasperating. I felt my face blushing; my eyes started with tears of anger. Whenever we discussed anything Maria had the upper hand of me. Her manner befogged my brain, so that I had to wait too long for the proper answer; she profited by my silence, to cram my head with a lot of words, confusing me still more.

But this time a light had come to me. With cruel relish I snapped at her: "And why weren't you in the house? Didn't Popa Anghel order you in?"

"No, he did not." She pulled herself up coldly. I was not abashed: "Did he send you in here?" I asked with mock sweetness.

"Oh," she moaned, "You are just a bad, vicious, little urchin!" And stretching out on the hay, she cried softly.

I could see her shoulders shake. Something sagged in the very core of me. I felt limp. With great effort I crawled out. Putting my face close to Maria's head, I began repeating: "What have I done? What have I done?" She covered her ears, her shoulders shaking the more with stifled sobbing.

I repeated these four words so often that at length they seemed very stupid to me in the presence of Maria's grief. I fell silent. I put my hand on her head. Her hair was soft, alive. Her head seemed to beat against my finger-tips, like a heart. That made me terribly sad and compassionate with Maria. Leaning my face softly against her head, I began to cry also. We cried together, like that, for a long time.

At length, a feeling of lightness, a strange happiness invaded me, like the return of health in convalescence. With each passing moment my well-being increased. And not only my sense of smell was become keen and refined, but my entire body was now as sensitive to touch as my finger-tips.

I felt the fragrant air on my face as if it were something alive; my very clothes seemed like living skin, growing from my body. I felt strong. Very strong. I felt as if a living force, a force of growth, were pushing outward through the wall of my body. Carried away by this power, swung on a wave of warm light, I turned Maria to me with a quick and agile move and looked into her astonished eyes. Then, embracing her with all my strength, bent to her ear, saying: "Maria, I love you."

For one short instant Maria looked at me earnestly; then her eyes smiled, her lips and her face smiled. She put up her arms, her sleeves fell back to her armpits, and smoothed my hair. Her fingers streamed delight into me. Suddenly she encircled my neck and pressed me to herself.

We kissed on the lips, on the eyes, and swore eternal love to each other.

It is known that our greatest weakness lies in the effort to eternalize an emotional state. Only Nirvana can be eternal because it is nothingness. An emotion has an apex. There is an ascent and a descent. But this is wisdom, and how could Maria or myself know this, for all we had then was the great urge of life.

I hope, for Maria's sake, that like her father she remained on life's side, unwise . . .

The following summer my uncle took me into the mountains. He made me bathe in warm whey, "to equip you for life," he said. We fed on corn mush and sweet cream — skimmed from sheep's milk cooling in wooden trays — and on that delicacy of the Carpathian shepherd, frozen mutton stew. The odor of that dish, mixed with the fragrance of rosin and pine-gum, can resurrect the dead.

The whey bath, the morning baths in spring water, the rolling on the dewy slope until my body tingled, and my uncle's

rations gave me such vigor and strength that I wrestled with the shepherds the whole day. In the evening I wished for a bear to come along, so we could have a real, rough tussle. And I thought of Maria, wishing she were there. Lying on the carpet of pine-needles, inhaling the heavenly air of the old forest, my thoughts were ever with Maria. That feeling, first experienced in the barn, the feeling of an inner force pushing on the walls of my body, never left me. At times it became painful, for it had no other outlet than shouting, wrestling or running. Because I was aware that this force surged purposefully — towards Maria, my love — only her presence near me could justify it and perchance relieve me from its pain.

I waited endless days, in torturing desire.

Then, Maria came. Elisabeth with her husband, and Jacob and Maria. What a day that was!

The presence of a woman in the solitude of the mountains is more welcome than the first day of Spring after a hard winter. But who can describe the feeling if the woman happens to be the loved one?

Maria and Elisabeth were the first to appear on the edge of the horizon. The shepherds saw them. With a shout they threw their caps in the air, and began jumping and pushing each other. They baa-ed, moo-ed and neighed — seized with a frantic animal joy.

I stood petrified, scanning the distance. They called to me: "See there, brave one! Female folks! Mother mine — female folks! Young too . . . young, sure! Sure as daylight!" They sang.

"You can see the way they ride. Happy horses! Mother mine — Young, plump heifers!"

Even my uncle changed suddenly when he saw them. His eyes sparkled, his black beard took on a bright sheen. A vibrant ring came into his voice. He moved about quickly, ordering

Dan to slaughter a young ram. Before the visitors reached us, the fire roared under the big kettle started by him. He even peeled the onions, a peck of them, as fast as four womanly hands. He threw the onions in the kettle to simmer and to yield up their flavor before the meat was put in. An hour after, we were all seated on blankets, our mouths watering for the fragrant stew.

My uncle lorded over the shepherds, stroking his beard, his eyes on Elisabeth, who sat pensively, watching the distance where mountain peaks glowed in the setting sun. When we ate, he sat near Elisabeth. With a wooden fork he pointed to the choicest morsels for her to pick.

Aha, good uncle, I must tell this, for you even touched her hand several times. At her faintest smile, you laughed uproariously. But I was pouting with a fierce joy, watching you jealously, because I did not sit near Maria as I wished.

When the moon came up, the sheep were safe in the enclosure. The four shepherds played on their fifes. We danced, sang with them, Maria's piercing voice dominating the others like a cry. I never left Maria, but Jacob remained always near her also.

When the hour came for us to go to bed, Maria walked leisurely towards the spring, alone. I followed her unseen, by her or anyone else. In front of the little pool into which the water trickled from a wooden pipe stuck in the rock, Maria stopped, stretching like a sleepy cat. I could hear her inhale the air. Then she cupped her hands under the streamlet and drank. With her wetted palms she patted her cheeks. That moment I came up to her.

The moonlight formed a halo around Maria. The water trickled shimmeringly into the basin. A light wind hummed in the fir trees beyond and played with Maria's hair. I felt lighter than the wind. I felt tall, my chest expanded and I inhaled the

scented air in long, deep breaths. A soothing warmth suffused my body, prickled my face.

Quietly, but with all the feeling I could put into my voice I said to her: "Maria! Dearest Maria!"

She looked at me steadily, without a smile; without the least movement of her lively features. She stood and looked at me, the wind playing with her hair.

"Won't you say a word, Maria?" I asked softly.

Maria moved her arms as if wings. Then she said:

"The air here is — you know — it makes me feel as it I were bathing in very clear water."

"Oh yes! It is — just exactly — like the purest water. Maria, you know it is one year since we have been together."

"I know," she said, with sudden animation, "and you have not grown at all. I have been looking at you."

"I? Oh, yes, Maria, I have grown a lot."

"It can't be noticed. Not a bit." There was laughter in her voice.

"But — I can throw you, Maria," I said courageously. She laughed out loud, slapping her thighs.

"I surely can. Want to try?"

"I'll duck your head in that pool. I'll give you a second baptism," she laughed.

"All right, then do." I rushed upon her and the grappling started.

Her legs were like stone pillars. Her arms like cables around me. I could not budge her feet. Her body bent slightly under my efforts now one way now the other, but her spread legs stood planted on the ground. Grinding my teeth, I dug my fists into the middle of her spine. Maria's trunk expanded with a deep breath, her muscles stiffened. Her feet shifted for a better grip on the ground. In a flash I flew up in the air, her arms

coiled around my waist. She held me above the ground, pressing my ribs with her arms. Then, with all her force, she threw me, as if to plant me in the earth. I struck it with both feet at once, but my knees did not bend; anticipating her move, I spread my legs and stiffened them with all the force in me. Arching my back, I feigned pulling her towards me. As she resisted I quickly pushed her backwards. We fell heavily, but before I could realize it, Maria was on top of me, clutching my shoulders and pressing them to the ground; I could hardly breathe.

She held me like that for a time, then bending to me, so close that her breath struck in my face, she asked pantingly:

"Well, great hero — who won?"

"Didn't I throw you?" I groaned.

"You pushed me all right, but who is on top? Whose shoulders are pinned to the ground?"

"Who struck ground first?" I asked, trying to laugh.

"What of it? I did! But you — can you move?" With that she put all her weight on her outstretched arms. My shoulders ached under the pressure.

"Yes," I teased, "but look where the pool is. You said you'd duck my head."

Maria turned slightly to look at the spring, unwittingly releasing her hold.

With a swiftness that surprised me even, I turned on my right shoulder and throwing my left arm around her waist, I threw Maria off to one side. Instantly she grabbed my hair and swung my head backwards. My neck pained from the sudden jerk. I almost cried out in impotent rage.

"God Almighty, give me strength," I cried under my breath. But the coolness of the grass under my cheek felt good. The smell of the ground was sweet. The moonlight on Maria's face and shoulders, wonderful to look at. Her forearm rested on

my face as she held my hair. She looked at me with smiling eyes. She breathed with parted lips, her strong teeth showing. I made no move, for I realized suddenly that it all was wonderful. It was supremely delicious to be lying there, Maria and myself, side by side, on the fragrant grass, in the moonlight, listening to the breathing of the sheep and of the pine forest.

Maria's warm arm rested on my cheek like a caress. Even the feeling of her fingers clutching my hair was good. Occasionally a wave of pine-drenched air rolled over us and I heard the metallic rustle of some thistles, close to my head. At the spring the water prattled endlessly, the tiny noise as infinite as the sky above.

Maria did not move, thank God, only her eyelids blinked now and then. Silently we looked at each other, then our eyes would turn and dive for an instant into the depth of the sky.

After a time, as if awakened from a reverie, Maria released my hair and pulled her arm away, but remained as she had been. I was sorry to lose the touch of her arm on my face. I moved my head closer to Maria's, smiling happily. She answered me with her smile, then in a whisper she asked:

"Have I hurt you — Peter?"

"Oh, no, Maria, not at all, not the least, least bit."

"Truly not?"

"I swear — Maria."

"Then I am glad." She reached and stroked my hair. I took her hand, laid it on the ground and rested my face on it. After a while her arm got tired so she moved closer to me, leaving her hand under my face.

For a long time we remained unmoving, looking only at each other. Then, the moon still shining on us, the water still tittering, a common impulse gathered us in each other's arms.

When we returned to the cabin the moon was high. All was silent inside, but Jacob sat, leaning against the outside wall of the cabin. The white light of the moon fell on him, spilling from his ruffled hair over his bronzed face and chest like a shimmering veil of water. Seeing us, Jacob stopped humming, but did not move. He pointed beside him for us to sit down. Maria sat down close to him. I took my place near her. We sat silently, looking into the distance, an abyss of powdery light.

The forest close by stirred softly and breathed upon us its scent.

"This is the queen of all my nights," Jacob said at length. Leaning forward he turned to me saying: "Do you remember, Peter, that song, '*Sleepy birds to their nests are flying?*'

I nodded.

"Let us sing it then, all three of us," he said, touching Maria's hand. We sang. First very softly, then louder, then quietly again, almost whisperingly, repeating many times the words of that melancholy genius, Eminescu. Our song ended, softer than the breath of the forest.

The lamenting song was the swan song of my love, for when we had fallen silent, Jacob turned to Maria, asking:

"Have you told him?"

"No," answered Maria.

"You have not? Why?"

Maria did not answer. Folding her hands in her lap, she leaned back against the wall and closed her eyes. Jacob bent to look in her face.

"Tell him now, then," he said.

Maria opened her eyes. Evenly, without a tremor in her voice, without a change on her face, looking straight in front of her, Maria said:

"Peter, I am going to be Jacob's wife; our fathers have agreed." I jumped up. Looked at them, sitting there, the moonlight full upon them. Then — in a gay but shrill voice — I cried:

"Surely! Of course! Yes, of course! My very best wishes to you — both. My greatest good wishes to you!" And I ran into the cabin.

In the darkness I heard the breathing of Elisabeth and her husband. Cautiously I went to my bed in the chimney corner. Lying on the blanket, I began suddenly to wonder how it happened that I did not see before, the light which, coming from the windows, made two clear, rectangular spots on the floor.

For a long time I tormented my mind with the question: How is it I did not see those pools of light when I entered the cabin?

A SLIGHT MISTAKE

by

Mikäil Zochtchenko

"WHAT day is it today?" asked Gregory Ivanovich. "Wednesday, it seems . . . Of course. Wednesday. It happened on Monday. On Monday the workers in our factory nearly died of laughing. It was too funny for words. A little error had occurred.

"Of course you know the people in our factory are all literate. Wake anyone up in the middle of the night and ask him to sign his name. He'll do it. That is because the 'Troika'* sent to our factory was a very strenuous one. In three months they liquidated all illiteracy. Of course there were some quite incapable fellows who would always mix up their names. Yousseff, for instance, never got it straight. He would write the S in the wrong place, put the flourish on too early, or forget the letter Y. But the others got on all right. Now, remembering this, imagine what happened!

"It was only by chance that Yeremei Mironovich noticed the slip. Saturday, say, is payday. And on Monday the cashier checks up the pay-cards to see whether accounts are correct. There he is clicking on the abacus, and all of a sudden he spots a cross on the payroll. All around, signatures; but in one field a cross. Why a cross? thinks the cashier. Why this cross, when all illiteracy has been fundamentally liquidated and everybody knows how to sign his name?

"The cashier looks and sees that the cross is placed against the name of Hlebnikoff. He says to the bookkeeper, 'Just look, there's a cross!' The bookkeeper to the secretary; the secretary passes it on. Soon it is all around the workroom.

* Troika, a commission of three members.

What was the Troika about, if in all that time they couldn't liquidate illiteracy? The Predzoffkom* runs to the cashier and asks for the payroll. The Troika stands round with a sheepish grin on its three faces. They all look and see the cross against Hlebnikoff's name.

"'Who is this Hlebnikoff?' they all ask. "'Why is this Hlebnikoff not liquidated? Why is everybody else enlightened and literate and only Hlebnikoff perishing in abysmal darkness? How can this be possible? What was the Troika doing, and what organ did it use for its thinking?'

"The Troika stands and shrugs six shoulders. They call for Hlebnikoff. He is a skilled wood-turner. He comes very reluctantly. They ask him, 'Are you literate?' 'Literate,' he replies. 'Can you sign your name?' 'Of course I can. Three months they spent liquidating me.'

"The Predzoffkom spreads out his arms. The Troika shrugs shoulders. The cashier produces the payroll. They hand it to Hlebnikoff and ask, 'Who signed this cross?' Hlebnikoff looks and looks. 'The handwriting,' he says, 'is mine. I wrote this cross. I was dead drunk. Couldn't sign my name.'

"Shouts of laughter. Everyone congratulates the Troika. It is absolved of every doubt. They shake hands with Hlebnikoff. 'This,' they say, 'is a mountain lifted from our shoulders. Why, we almost thought that you, Hlebnikoff, even now, like a blind man, were still lost in abysmal darkness.'

"For the next half month's pay, Hlebnikoff, for all his literacy, signed once more with a cross. Drunk again! But nobody was astonished now. They had become used to it. They knew he was a literate man."

— translated from the Russian
by Helena Clayton.

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* Predzoffkom, president of the administrative committee.

RETURN OF QUEEN AGNES

by

Whit Burnett

The Queen moved slowly toward the doorway. At the threshold the door was opened for her. Some of the others, remaining in the dwelling of their host, stood by. Their eyes were round in admiration. The Queen lingered a further moment, the little pink parasol opened above her head, the stick held straight before her, her small fingers tensed together.

Oblivious to the kind words, the flutterings of farewell, the Queen stood in the open door. She advanced a tiny foot. She hoped no one would follow her.

And then Frau Müller, standing there nearby, said something to the Queen, which seemed at once to pierce her in her deep abstraction.

She turned, her eyes were hurt, yet burned with pride. Her cheeks burned too.

"*Nein, nein, nein!*" she cried. Her foot stamped out a period.

She turned again, facing out into the cold November twilight that lingered on the woods. And then, along the pathway to the gate she went, and through the gate; and step by step, precisely, in all majesty, she continued her way.

Her way led up the darkening road between the wooded hills. Her eyes were straight ahead, and as a big bird or two

flew over the roadway or just above the trees, the Queen was but a tiny, moving thing upon the road between the deepening groves.

The daylight was fast dying, and a white mist rose trembling from the grass beside the little brook. The gold had gone from the tree trunks, the furtive splendor of the last long rays of sun. And all the beeches had loosened the bright richness of their copper leaves, and stood abandoned of their loveliness, black arms in the dusk, the blacker earth beneath them enriched by the spotted covering.

Far down the road, up which the Queen was slowly walking, the village houses uttered friendly curls of chimney smoke. Now and then some far distant human sound, or the sound of some animal, domestic to the place, broke the stillness. Or a blackbird, hopping along the edges of the road, scattered the leaves with a fury of sound, shaking his beak and shoulders in the ferocity of his interest after worms.

Once the Queen, her eyes fixed in the distance, her hand tensed about the stem of the bright pink parasol, came so near a blackbird that she involuntarily quickened her pace and might, she thought, almost have caught it. But then she remembered.

"Go away, you big Amsel," she said, aloud.

"Go away," she repeated. "Go away."

She was going to keep on repeating that, in time to her steps, but then the great preoccupation returned. She shut her lips, tightly, and refrained.

Once, three roughtly dressed men, with sticks in their hands and packs on their backs, came down the road in front of her. They passed her wonderingly. They said something, and for an instant the Queen bit her lip, but on they passed, laughing and talking to themselves. Then she could hear them

only as the dwindling crunching of their shoes, and the sharp click of the points of their sticks as the metal glanced against the stones in the road.

The Queen's hand which clasped the little sun shade was cold. It was pink with the cold, pink like the parasol and the gay pink fringe quivering in the slight night wind. And her nose, too, was cold. But her pace remained as steady and as fixed as at first. Step by step. Proudly. Step by step. Her head held back and looking far ahead. Her eyes fixed on the distance as if marching into other worlds.

The road went upwards through the trees. In any less important hour, the Queen might now have turned and gazed across the world of woods, of magic trees, peopled with the beasts of Wiener Wald, and magic birds and witches, and now and then a neighbor's barking dog. She did not see below her in the valley of the north the distant town of Klosterneuburg, nor could she hear the singing in the taverns and the sounds of drinking and the merriment remembering St. Leopold. St. Leopold who once, in centuries gone, had given riches to the town and one great abbey thus to memorialize that finding of the wedding veil that Agnes, spirit of the woods, had lost one day amid the silent beeches. Nor did the Queen look toward the eastern sky, where the old gray stones of Leopold's castle reared its ruins above the pilgrims of the day that gathered on the mountain there to celebrate.

The Queen walked on. The cold air made her blue eyes water, but the light of secret ecstacy, the fire beneath the surface of the jewel, was there. Once she bit her lip, and a tear, inspired by other than the cold, trembled on a lash.

"Should not Herr Müller go with you?" she remembered how Frau Müller said it. "Aren't you too little to go all that way alone? Please, let Herr Müller come then with."

The Queen's teeth came together, tight again, a long, hard minute. She relaxed to say:

"*Nein, Nein, Nein!*"

The one hand, warming in her jacket pocket, doubled as a fist. Her jacket fit her tightly. It was last year's jacket, and the Queen was now a whole year older. It was a simple jacket. And the Queen was dressed in simpleness, excepting only the glory of her head-dress and her open parasol with the fringes and the cotton cloth of radiant pink. She wore, it is true, her very best shoes, the black ones which shined so well if you brushed them hard, and she wore her best white stockings.

It was the crown, of shiny silver, which gave the Queen her bearing. It made, in fact, her neck a little stiff. Not that the crown was heavy; it was light as paper. But one remembered nearly every minute Frau Müller's words, when the crown was placed, a favor, on its wearer. So, hold the head, now . . . There, just so . . . *Nein,* a little higher. Ach, now you are a Queen . . . Queen Agnes herself . . . And see how the beautiful pink paper hair comes down now across the shoulders here in front! So . . . And so.

Ahead now the Queen could see her home. The tiny cottage, green and pretty, rested gravely by the roadside. And overshadowing it with rich unfailing green was the great lone pine that looked at times like some gaunt witch with roving, drooping arms. It sang through the nights with a whispering song. It was the Queen's Big Tree. But the solemnity and dignity of her bearing did not change as her eyes took in the old familiar sight.

She stiffened her neck again so that the paper crown soared even a trifle higher in its silvered brightness and a little rustle, like the whispering in the pines, came from the rich pink waves of paper hair, cascading down her shoulders.

Fritzl, her mind thought. Would he come?

"*Nein,*" she said.

Don't come, Fritzl, she thought. Don't come like you always do if I go to the store. Barking and leaping. He will upset everything. Don't, please don't come.

And no one else. No one else. She hoped no one else would meet her. She would go in the front door then or knock maybe and they would open and she would stand there for they would not know she was coming home so soon and they would look at her in all her glory and she would stand there. Straight. Her head back. Queen. The house-lights on the silver of the crown.

"*Ich bin Königin,*" she said. I am a Queen.

Her hand was stiff. But still it clenched in the tight determined pose the tiny parasol. Nothing must happen to change her head or hand or crown. She hardly thought of how her hand was stiff. She thought, *I' bin Königin.*

The rails of the fence around her house were at her side. And through the slits she saw the front room of the house — when roaring through the gateway leapt old Fritzl, barking his joyful greetings.

The dog came bounding. Brushing his tail like a busy broom, he jumped at the tiny figure in the road.

"Go 'way, Fritzl," cried the Queen.

But the dog, familiar of too many tussles, was not to be dismissed. He barked and barked again.

The Queen walked on. Her eyes she kept fast fixed ahead. The gate was not two dozen steps away.

But the barking now aroused the house. The doorway of the cottage opened, and a woman in a black skirt, her sleeves rolled to the elbow and her hair swished back across her face, emerged.

The woman ran to the gate, and the sight of the child, alone, walking toward her, queenly in the splendor of the strange, pink, party favors of the Müller's party, twinged her motherly heart.

"Ach," she cried, and the tears of love came to her eyes. She swooped to gather the infant in her arms. "Ach, my pretty baby! My own little girl!"

A cry, sharper than the cut of pain, came from the child.

She drew away. The crown slipped over an ear. A world of high creation crashed on the earth. The tears welled forth and covered her cheeks in a wash.

"*Nein, Nein, Nein!*" she screamed.

"But, mother's little *liebling* —" soothed the mother.

"*Ich bin Königin,*" cried the child. "*I' bin Kŏnigin.*"

Her cold hand went to straighten the crown. But a bitterness of doubt was in the voice. The dog swished in between her legs. She almost stumbled.

And then, the beauty and the glory lost in tears, the Queen walked wearily up the steps, and at the last but one, finally let her mother take her hand, and entered, exhausted, the house of her parents, her dog, her older sisters, her little bed and dolls.

THE MAN ON THE ISLAND

A PORTRAIT

by

Fritz von Unruh

From a distance I could see the park with the grey-white painted railing and the high peaked gate, now shining garishly in the sun. Above that, cedar boughs — black and hot. The street was dusty, white as flour, empty. Two lone donkeys were being driven by. The sun hurt. I went into the shade and stared through the iron bars of the fence. Some way off, behind the trees, I discerned his house.

When I opened the garden gate two Turks in tennis clothes came by, dangling their rackets, and looked at me suspiciously. The lock closed noisily behind me. From a bench I had not observed inside a girl jumped up. In her blue and white dress she skipped ahead of me without looking around. Slowly I followed her along the narrow path between the high boxwood hedges toward the villa.

To the right in an unkempt kitchen garden were cabbage stalks burned up with the heat, rustling in the breeze. I stopped. Save for the girl, who went on unconcerned, no one was to be seen. The garden seemed under some uncanny spell. Pulling a branch of the hedge aside I saw two men — they were sitting on a stone table and letting strings of amber beads glide mechanically through their fingers.

I recognized them again. The detectives. The ones who accompany the exile every day when he goes fishing in the sea. Their scrutiny was alarmingly close. But they let me pass. And now the girl suddenly turned around: "What is it you want?"

"I want to see Herr Trotsky."

"There is the door." With a negligent movement of the hand she pointed to the entrance.

The forecourt, paved with white marble slabs, so glowed in the sun that my rubber soles stuck to it. In the center, checkered by the restless blue shadows of oleanders in blossom, water plashed monotonously from a carved arabesque fountain. The color of the house front was unrecognizable in the sheer glare of light. I tried to ring. The bell was not working. The girl noticed my efforts and called something in Turkish into an open window, apparently the kitchen. I waited. From the roof ridge two doves fluttered down with a noise like castanets and perched cooing on the rim of the fountain.

Finally the pale, amiable Secretary appeared, let me in and offered me a seat in the large cool hall. Then he hurried off.

Step by step I heard him mounting a stairway and, directly, his footsteps passed so rapidly over the ceiling of the hall that the crystals of the chandelier tinkled.

I had leisure to look around. The apartment was some eight yards long by five yards wide. All around the walls stood voluptuous, flowered divans. Over them, large mirrors. Otherwise the room was as bare as the waiting room of a surgical clinic. Only a yellow marble basin recalled the former owner of the house. Here it was that that great scoundrel and crony of Sultan Abdul Hamid, Izet Pasha, held his orgies. In this pool, wreathed with bronze garlands of heavy colored glass grapes, the beautiful harlots of Stamboul bathed when Izet's

voluptuaries lay back exhausted in the cushions. On that six-foot-tall bronze peacock, which stretches aloft his fly-specked beak with so proud a swing of the neck, used to ride — so a waiter told me — the boys of the Pasha's pleasure. The Pasha, in his grey Paris-made suit, looking on, sweating and groaning senilely, reviving the flagging raptures with the gold filched from the people . . . Now the opalesque enamel and the glass of the tail feathers are grey with dust. Vanitas vanitatum! In artist circles they have a panic terror of peacock feathers, the bird of bad luck. Has the exiled People's Commissar of the Red Army no fear of it?

Again the crystal tinkles on the chandelier. The Secretary's footsteps down the stairs. He throws open the door, comes in, goes across the hall and into another room. A moment's embarrassment? In spite of our correspondence and the promised meeting? . . The Secretary returns. "If you please." And leads me up the bare stairs through a greenish white-washed staircase into the hall above.

On the walls are shelves of unpolished wood. Many shelves, stuffed with manuscripts, filled with files. A small iron stove. Its long black pipe shoots straight aloft and crawls along the ceiling like a snake. Through the open balcony door, over the pine-crests, streams the blinding brilliance of the Sea of Marmora. The highest branch of a cedar is red as coral.

"Herr Trotsky begs you . . ." the Secretary bows and ushers me quickly to a high door on the right, knocks, opens and lets me in alone.

A white, seated figure rises. Curt military bow:

Trotsky!

With a short gesture he offers me a chair. We sit down. Trotsky at his extensive, immense writing table, myself at the end of it . . .

He says nothing.

Neither do I . . .

In the first moment he reminds me of a photograph of Strindberg. Perhaps it is his face with the strange mouth that gives this impression. A grey, bristly tuft of a beard covers the receding, almost non-existent chin. His complexion is pallid, ill, cheesy. His grey-shot hair ends in a natural wave, as one sometimes sees in dentists with an interest in the arts.

His pince-nez reflects the sun. So glaringly that I cannot make out his eyes. The unplaned table-top is covered with manuscripts, books, encyclopaedias. In front of me lies a newspaper in Arabic characters. Trotsky's profile is framed by a window opening at the side on gardens and isolated houses of the island. In the background the hazy contours of the mountains of Asia Minor. His well-kept hands play with a turquoise-blue fountain pen, to and fro, like a pendulum, swinging over sheets of manuscript during the silence that grows more and more embarrassing.

The sun is sinking. Trotsky smiles and looks up. Our eyes meet . . . his eyes are charged with spirit. Ascetic, imperious, unexpectedly bright. Yes, from that look one can believe he makes no compromises. It is all alive. Clear, blue, like the fountainpen, which he is still scratching to and fro on a typewritten page. He looks at me sharply, coldly and appraisingly. His snow-white suit, with a high collar and like a uniform, has the effect of an officer's summer wear.

"Many thanks," I begin, "for having received me."

Trotsky makes a noncommittal, smiling movement with his head, without giving up his silence. He is sitting on a plain wooden chair. Behind him against the wall stands a wide, comfortable, brown leather baroque arm chair.

"You've come from Germany?" His German is without accent.

"No, from Italy."

"Yes." He looks away into the distance. Then — "What's Ernst Lissauer doing?"

"Ernst Lissauer? During the war he wrote the poem '*Gott strafe England!*'"

Trotsky thrusts his underlip far out, and still keeps sweeping away with his fountainpen. He twitches, nervously.

"And what has become of the actor Granach? I met him in Berlin before the war. And Piscator? And Reinhardt? Still the same spectacle and pomp as before the war? I have only followed your literature up to 1914, then —" he smiled, "then, it stands to reason, no longer."

"Yes, and for many writers it's a problem today whether they should go on writing, or in an hour like this take up some active part . . ."

"Why so? Everyone has his place. But don't *force* anything. The mental worker also has his value. Of course a writer — because of his very form of expression — has at the same time an aesthetic influence — that sounds a bit *bourgeois*. Yet the poet has an essential part in the picture. For God's sake, no compulsion! Don't force yourself to anything! The masses naturally think only of the goal — and must think of that. Onward! That is the watchword of the workman! The writer doesn't see the world from one side only — and he must not. That's why he is always more bound up with the bourgeois world than with that of the working-people. The worker has no time yet for the aesthetic."

"'All we lack is a trifle, Time!' said Dehmel."

"Yes, yes," Trotsky gives a lively nod, "that's it — no time!"

A long pause intervenes. As with Strindberg, his lips are pursed out and the hairs of the moustache combed back from

the mouth. Suddenly he turns: "Was not one of your name President of the first National Assembly in 1848?" I confirm this.

"You see," he says, "the movement of '48 couldn't come to anything. It was anticipated by Luther. With the Reformation he liberated the middle class. And what the Reformation meant for the middle class, Social Democracy meant for the proletariat. For that reason the German revolution in 1918 had no power behind its punch. And just as Luther then allied himself again with the princes against the middle classes, so the Socialists lined up again with the middle classes against the proletariat. Of course there were exceptions, Rosa Luxemburg. Liebknecht — did you know him?"

"Yes, I used to hear his speeches during the Revolution. But the crowd isn't the same with us in Germany as in Russia. In Russia they were surely more apathetic, more oppressed."

"Yes, yes, beyond doubt . . . And now you're having elections again. They will bring big changes and benefit the Communists. They are still badly led some times, though there are some good leaders too, today. The cause is making headway."

"I believe the National-Socialists are more likely to gain in power."

Trotsky shakes his head: "Who is this Hitler? Do you know him?"

"No. But a Hitlerite recently said to me: 'Marxism has been foisted onto the people from outside by a few intellectuals. The secret of Hitler's strength consists in this — he tries to combine the social with the national."

Trotsky leans back: "Yes, the Socialists are the trouble! They are not on their job. They always want to show the middle classes that they also are patriotic — just as in England. Your Labour Minister doesn't lead the workers, he is anxious above all to be acceptable among the Lords and at Court.

There are no *characters* now. Cromwell was one. And so was Robespierre. In 1789 Lenin would have stood in the very front rank of Democracy."

"You're a believer in personality?"

"Absolutely. As Marx was too! Of course!"

"The question was once raised whether if Lenin had not been allowed to pass through Germany the Revolution would ever have broken out in Russia."

"A futile question. The aim must be ripe. Then the leader is always there. Parties create their leaders. And it is no accident that Socialism has no leader who commands the future. Some also say: If Kerensky had had an ounce more sense in his head — then the Bolsheviks would never have come into power. But that's not the question at all, whether Kerensky had an extra ounce of sense — but that the middle class chose a Kerensky for their leader — that settled them. The movement is known by its leader. Like natural selection among the animals. Lenin — on a different plane of course — was a Luther. The protest was ripe among the proletariat. Not as it is with the Socialists: 'I might do something else' . . . but instead — No: 'Here I stand, I can not do otherwise!' That remains the formula of everlasting Revolution."

The sun has set, the skies are smouldering.

"For instance," he begins again, "how does this Labour Minister deal with the Indian Question? A lord, acting with historical foresight, acting as one of the ruling caste, would have gone about that quite differently. Whereas look at MacDonald's Indian policy — awful! But all that's only preparing the day of reckoning, the elementary process. It will all be ripe soon. Everything prepared. All that's lacking is the" — he searches for a word, turns round, at last gets it out — "*voix* . . ."

"*Die Stimme.*"

"*Ja, die Stimme* — only the voice is lacking, which summons, which awakes — O that must be there! That will be there: the voice." The man strikes the table fanatically with his fountainpen. ("Awake, the Voice doth call us" — I involuntarily think of the opening of that choral.)

Apropos of nothing, he asks: "What's Ludendorff doing?"

"He's trying to form a party of his own."

"To sit on the fence?"

"Have you read his book, 'World War Threatens German Soil?'"

He shakes his head.

"Who's *behind* Ludendorff?"

The form of the question so puzzles me at the moment that I find no immediate answer — How? — not: Who is so-and-so, but: who's behind him? Trotsky ignores my silence.

"In England," he continues, "there existed the possibility of a peaceful evolution. Now that's barred. Everything has been done to make it more catastrophic, exactly as in Germany."

He points with the pen to a few pages of manuscript: "I'm just finishing a new book."

?

"Yes, I'm writing a work on the Revolution." He holds up a typed page heavily corrected in ink. "There are two ways of showing revolution: one, by mirroring the course it takes — or else, how it originates. I don't mean the outer aspect of development, but how the revolutionizing process comes about within the masses."

"Technically?"

"No, not technically, but how one can see revolution gradually taking shape among the people. The book will soon be finished. Unfortunately I had only the library in Constantinople at my disposal." He shrugs his shoulders.

"I found your book, 'My Life', in all the shop windows, in France, Germany, in Italy, even here in Turkey. In this connection I'd like to ask you: What does a writer who has embraced collectivism do with the income from his work?"

Trotsky looks a little *verblüfft*. Then his lip curls somewhat contemptuously.

"That's not to be solved at all individually . . . When one has given oneself to a great cause" — his eyes open wide, pride of experience and a certain radiance come over him, a dignity, of course, such as only the service in a great cause might confer on a man. "But —" I ask further, "couldn't the title of your book 'My Life' easily be misconstrued to indicate an individualist attitude? Indeed as a thrust at the collectivist creed? — like that idolatry of Lenin in the sepulchre by the wall of the Kremlin, which you yourself as a Communist oppose so strongly in your book —?"

As he doesn't reply, I change the subject: "And how long do you think, Herr Trotsky, you'll still have to stay on this island?"

"That doesn't depend on me personally — that depends on events in Russia. But since the Turkish government has convinced itself that I am to be trusted, I may receive books and letters for my work. That's very quickly done by airmail."

When I ask after his wife and son he says nothing. And yet, how much more difficult to bear would his exile be without his family . . . "Do you find banishment very hard?"

"If I can have books and can work, I am always content."

"Here in Turkey — especially in Anatolia — I have seen a great deal of misery and starving people. Discontent, poverty . . ."

"Yes, this island used to be for the smart set. Now no one has anything anymore. There used to be a lot going on here. Today even the fish are leaving Prinkipo . . ."

"You're fond of fishing?"

"Yes, because I can't walk about much. I hate being stared at. Fishing is a sort of relaxation, exercise — that's all." His glance strays out of the window to the evening sky.

"In your book, Herr Trotsky, I was greatly struck by one passage: You describe your youthful escape over the Russian frontier. The cart upsets. Nearby stood the sentries. Suddenly there broke out a frightful cry, a cry that made you tremble all over. Then, in an overturned basket you discovered the cause — a cock was shut up in it and the cock had crowed."

"Yes, yes, one keeps such youthful memories. They leave their impress," he says, almost apologetically.

"That was the clarion-call of a new age, Herr Trotsky?"

He smiles. Is it scepticism — or resignation? So pallid his face becomes, like nature between two and three in the morning when the stars pale — the colors of the hour before dawn — "Herr Trotsky, then — the real sense in any revolution is as ever, isn't it — Man —?"

He looks past me, as if bored.

"Yes, yes."

I get up. He rises also. Again a curt bow. Then he sees me out. From a sofa the Secretary rises, screws the cap on a fountainpen and puts it away. Has he been taking it all down in shorthand? Trotsky takes a newspaper from the top of the cold stove, inclines his head slightly once more and goes back into his room.

— translated from the German
by Oliver Gossman.

UNTITLED STORY

by

José Garcia Villa

1 Father did not understand my love for Vi, so Father sent me to America to study away from her. I could not do anything and I left.

2 I was afraid of my father.

3 On the boat I was seasick and I could not eat. I thought of home and my girl and I had troubled dreams.

4 The blue waves in the young sunlight were like azure dancing flowers but they danced ceaselessly to the tune of the sun, to look at them made me dizzy. Then I would go to my cabin and lie down and sometimes I cried.

5 We were one month at sea. When I arrived in America I was lonely.

6 I windowshopped at Market Street in San Francisco and later when I was in Los Angeles I went to Hollywood but I remained lonely.

7 I saw President Hoover's home in Palo Alto but I did not care for President Hoover.

8 In California too I saw a crippled woman selling pencils on a sidewalk. It was night and she sat on the cold concrete like an old hen but she had no brood. She looked at me with dumb faithful eyes.

9 The nigger in the Pullman hummed to himself. At night he prepared our berths and he was automatic like a machine. As I looked at him I knew I did not want to be a machine.

10 In the university where I went there were no boys yet. It was only August and school would not begin until September. The university was on a hill and there the winds blew strong. In my room at night I could hear the winds howling like helpless young puppies. The winds were little blind dogs crying for their mother.

11 Where was the mother of the winds? I lay in bed listening to the windchildren crying for their mother but I would fall asleep before their mother had returned to them.

12 During the day the little blind puppies did not whimper much. It was only at night that they grew afraid of the dark and then they cried for their mother. Did their mother ever come to them? Maybe their mother had a lover and she loved this lover more than the little blind puppies.

13 I had nothing to do and I wrote home to my friends but my friends did not write to me.

14 One day a boy knocked at my room. He was young and he said he was alone and wanted to befriend me. He became dear to me.

15 The boy's name was David. He was poor and he wore slovenly clothes but his eyes were soft. He was like a young flower.

16 When David was sick I watched over him.

17 Afterwards David would not go anywhere without me.

18 Of nights David and I would walk thru the streets and he would recite poetry to me.

"Sunset and evening star
And one clear call for me . . ."

This was the slowness of David, the slowness of the sunset, of the evening star.

19 One night David came to me and said he was returning home the next morning. He could not earn enough money on which to go to school.

20 I died in myself.

21 After David had gone I walked the streets feeling I had lost a great, great something. When I thought of him it hurt very much.

22 School opened in September. At my table in the dining hall we were eight. I liked Georgia, Aurora, Louise and Greg. There was another girl and her name was Reynalda but she was a little haughty.

23 The boys were Joe and Wiley. Joe came from David's town and when I asked him about David he said they had been like Jonathan and David in high school. Joe loved David and David, who was far away now, became a bond between Joe and me.

24 Sometimes Joe and I got sore at each other but when we thought of David we became friends again.

25 Joe wanted to became a preacher and Wiley would be a sports editor. I did not know what I wanted to be. First when I was a boy I wanted to be a movie actor but later I did not want to be a movie actor. I wanted to paint but Father objected to it because he said painters did not make much money.

26 Father was a moneymaker. When he had made it he did not want to spend it. When I needed money I went to my mother and she gave it to me because she was not a moneymaker.

27 Then I fell in love with Georgia. Georgia had golden hair and I became enamoured of it. In my country all the girls

were blackhaired. I asked Georgia to let me feel her hair and when I ran my fingers thru it I became crazy about her.

28 Georgia and I went running around. Afterwards she wrote me love letters.

29 In one letter she called me My Lord, in another Beloved. But I called her just Georgia although sometimes I called her Georgie. When I called her Georgie I smiled because it was like a boy's name.

30 One day Georgia and I quarrelled and many nights thereafter I walked the streets muttering to myself. I did not know what I was saying. I called myself, You . . . but the sentence did not get finished. I would look at the sky and behold the stars and talk to myself.

31 One night I stopped talking to myself. I was no longer incoherent and the sentence on my lips that began with You . . . got finished.

32 The finished sentence was beauteous as a dancer in the dawn. The sentence was finished at night but it was not like the night but like the dawn.

33 Later Georgia and I made up but everything was not as it used to be. The finished sentence was beauteous like a dancer in the dawn. After a time I did not care for Georgia nor she for me.

34 I went to school but I did not like going to school.

35 I said to myself I would be thru with girls and love only the girl back home. I wondered if what had happened to me had happened too or was happening to Vi. As I thought it I got angry not at myself but with Vi.

36 A girl should be constant.

37 I was angry with Vi and in my fancy I saw many pictures of her with other boys. She was dancing and smiling and she had no thoughts of me.

38 Finally I dreamt Vi had got married and I woke up crying. Then I was no longer angry with Vi but with my father who had separated us. I wrote Father an angry letter blaming him. I said I would quit studying and did not care if he cut me off.

39 I was very angry I became a poet. In fancy my anger became a gorgeous purple flower. I made love to it with my long fingers. Then when I had won it and it shone like a resplendent gem in my hands I offered it to my father.

40 My father could not understand the meaning of the gorgeous purple flower. When I gave it to him he threw it on the floor. Then I said, My father is not a lover.

41 I picked the flower and it lived because my father refused it.

42 One morning at breakfast I told Wiley and Joe and the girls that I was quitting school and leaving for New York that afternoon. At first they would not believe me but I was quiet and pensive thruout the meal and finally they believed me. They wanted to know why I was leaving but I told them I did not know it myself.

43 At lunch they looked at me wistfully and I said: This is our last meal together. I became very sad.

44 I shook their hands and Louise and Aurora asked me it I would write to them. When I left the table they followed me softly with their eyes until I turned at the door.

45 Joe and Wiley walked with me to my room at the dorm. They did not want to leave me and in my room I said they must go for I must pack my things. They wanted to help me but I said I was not packing many things. I made them go after we had shaken hands and promised to write each other. Joe and Wiley wanted to go to the station to see me

off but I begged them not to. It would make me feel bad, I said.

46 And so I made Joe and Wiley go but when they had left my room I went to the window and looked at them long and I cried. I liked Joe and Wiley and Aurora and Louise — why was I leaving them?

47 Then I lay on the bed without moving. All the time I knew I was not truly leaving for New York yet I felt greatly hurt. In myself I was leaving and behind me I would leave Joe and Wiley and the girls. I would be lonely again as when I had first come to America.

48 I had said I was leaving for New York but it was not true. I was a liar because I had felt like telling a lie and I was angry with my father and in my mind I wanted to do something rash like leaving college and going about starving in a big city like New York.

49 In the big city New York, where I had never been, I was hungry and without money. I lived in a little dark room and it was dark and ugly for the rent was cheap. There was only one little window in the room and it was tight to open.

50 One night I opened the little window and a piece of paper blew in. It settled on the floor and then my mind began to work about it. — I am not alone. A lover is waiting for me outside. She has written me a letter calling me to her side . . . I will go to you, sweetheart, I whispered tenderly.

51 Then a strong wind blew in and the paper moved. — It is a white flower trembling with love. It is God's white flower. — It made me think of my gorgeous purple flower which my father had refused and I wanted it to become God's white flower. Make my purple flower white, God, I prayed.

52 In New Mexico I had prayed before about my father, mother and sisters but in New York I prayed about a flower.

53 In New York it was colder than in New Mexico.

54 I wanted to buy a new suit and go to see a new UFA film but I had no money.

55 Because I wanted to have a new suit and to see a new German film and I had no money I walked around in the streets. I looked at the haberdashery windows and gazed at the new styles. There was a winecolored suit with roped shoulders and if I only had money I could have it. It cost sixty-five dollars.

56 In front of the big cinema it was very bright. In San Francisco I saw the Fox Theatre and I thought it was very big but this was much bigger. It was very lavish. Rich young ladies and thin gay gentlemen poured in. They laughed goldenly.

57 Then I got tired walking and I returned to my little dark room and the dark made me want a woman.

58 It was cold in the room and I thought if I had a woman I would not feel so cold. We would share each other's warmth.

59 Warming woman, warming woman, I sang. How beautiful the words. How beautiful the thought.

60 Then I turned on the light and in the lighted room I took a book and read. The story was about a liar. I thought of myself. I had lied to Joe and Wiley and to Aurora and Louise and to everyone at the table. It had occurred to me to lie and I did and now I was living up to my lie.

61 All these adventures in New York I have been telling you about happened in my room as I lay on the bed crying because I was a liar. But I was not afraid to cry.

62 Later I dressed and pretended I was going to the station where I was leaving. After a time when I got dressed

I did not want to merely pretend and I left my room to go to the station.

63 On the way I met Aurora. She walked with me to the streetcorner to bid me goodbye. She held my hands long and her hold was tight. Her hands were soft like flowers and thin like roots but they were strong lovers. Her hands made cruel love to my hands.

64 Write to me, her mouth said — but her hands, have we not touched the touch to last us for ever? the touch of music that knows no forgetting?

65 When I had already gotten into the bus and the bus started Aurora did not move. She stood at the corner her eyes following me. She stood there long, immobile, and I waved my hand at her but only her eyes moved. Her hands that had been lovers were quiet now. Her whole body was become a quiet lover. As the bus moved away, in the far corner she was no longer a quiet lover but a song of serenity.

66 In the bus strange thoughts came to me: I have touched her hands. Why do I not love her the way I loved Georgia? Why have I not asked to touch her hair? Maybe if I touched her hair I would love her like I was maddened by Georgia . . . I should have touched her hair. She would have liked it. We would have became lovers.

67 As to Georgia I did not bid her goodby and I did not care. — I touched her hair. I ran my fingers thru her hair. After I finished the sentence that was beauteous as a dancer in the dawn I did not care to touch her hair. — In the bus I could not understand why and it made me feel sad.

68 I got off at the station and waited for the 5.30 train. It came and then it left. I watched it till I could not see it. I wondered if I was in it.

69 Had I bidden myself goodbye?

70 Afterwards I walked thru the town as if I had gone out of myself. I looked for myself vainly. I was nowhere. I was now only a shell, a house. The house of myself was empty.

71 My god had flown away and carried with him my gorgeous purple flower. Will Father laugh now?

72 Where had my god fled? Where was he taking my purple flower which my father had refused?

73 In the morning, on the campus, I met Aurora and she said I fooled her. Later everybody said I fooled them. But to Aurora, as I thought of her as she had stood at the streetcorner, her hands making love to my hands, and of her when she was a song of serenity, I said: Your hands have told me an unforgettable story. Your song of serenity has awakened me. Now let me feel your hair . . .

74 My god was in her hair. My god was there with my purple flower pressed gently to his breast. I opened his hands and he yielded to me my flower. I pinned it to Aurora's hair. And as the purple petals kissed the soft dark of her hair, my flower turned silver, then white — became God's white flower. Then I was no longer angry with my father.

REVOLUTION CAN WAIT

by

Martha Foley

Arise ye prisoners of starvation.

Heavy Lett faces, topaz Italian ones, cameo-cut Jewish, German, Irish, shone together in the song. Tears were in Mary's eyes. Arise ye wretched of the earth. In Russia red flags waved. Red of the people's blood. Red of the people's good, good hearts. Mary did not sing. She couldn't. But her thoughts sang. People together. The world their country. No war. No suffering. Justice. Peace. Oh, that at last the people were coming together. For justice thunders condemnation. A better world's in birth.

Mary left the hall exalted. She was always exalted these days. The revolution, the revolution was coming. She, shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the world's oppressed, was bringing the great upheaval. These were momentous times. And she was important in them. Future generations would look back to these days, more stirring than those of the Bastille. Arise ye prisoners.

Mary went back to the party headquarters. Up a gray flight of stairs where the elevated railroad crashed by. There were two rooms, one small, an office, the other large, a meeting place. The mechanical piano at one end of the large room

was screeching out a piece called The Doves. A few members of the party were sitting about the place.

Mary entered the dingy, smoky room as a shrine. She did all but genuflect before the red-draped picture of Karl Marx. She sat down in one corner of the room, apart from the others. She did not want to talk to anyone. She was still glowing from the meeting. It was so impressive. That red-haired, blue-eyed woman — how she had flamed as she talked. The men and women of the working class will no longer stand for the injustice of their masters. Comrades, I tell you, the time is here when we must rise in our might and tear asunder these cruel chains which bind us.

A great woman that. A Joan of the labor movement. Mary wished she could pour forth molten words. But, somehow whenever she got up in the Public Gardens or Scollay Square to speak no matter how intensely she felt what she wanted to say the words always paled and faded.

And there had been that other speaker at the meeting. From New York also. Keen, dark, alive. But too cold. Too technical, thought Mary. Food, clothing and shelter. Bourgeois ideology. Economic determinism. Words like that did not feed the workers' enthusiasm. Words like that were not what the people wanted. They wanted the red-headed woman's fire. Although the Russians and Jews had seemed to hang on his words. Important, no doubt. But Mary wanted music in her revolution The beautiful rhythm of marching feet. Mary gripped her hands so tight that the nails bit deep into her palms.

The room was filling. Other people were coming back from the meeting. The red-haired woman and the black-haired man.

"Yes, this is little Comrade Mary, our secretary. She arranged the meeting."

"Dear little comrade, I am glad to know you." The red-

haired woman took Mary's hand and did not let it go. "You did wonderfully."

The black-haired man stood next to the red-haired woman. He did not speak to Mary. She knew he was there, that was all. She felt close to this dazzling woman who would not let her hand go. Comrades, they two were comrades. The rest of the world was far away.

Mary went to dinner with the red-haired, blue-eyed woman. She talked of strikes and picket lines, of jails and mobbings, of Siberian exiles and the Wobblies in the west. Mary said yes or no. Just as she couldn't sing at the meeting, so now she couldn't talk. Only sit in ecstasy. This was the revolution. She and this woman. Together they stood against all the tyranny in the world. These masters of men, they would see. Starving pickets and broken prisoners, they, not the great and the rich, would conquer.

Mary went to the door of the hotel with the red-haired woman. It was late but Mary was too excited to go home. Home to the smug, square-set house behind its combed and brushed hedge and its precise flowers where she could hear the breathing of men and women who thought only of the next day's work and the next day's amusement and the next day's money and who, when they thought at all of the revolution, put it down as the machinations of crazy foreigners. No, she could not go home. She would walk. Out under the stars which would soon shine on a free world.

Mary walked. For several miles. When she was tired she turned a corner and stopped in the Golden Rooster. Boston's one Bohemian restaurant. It had been raided by the police as a disorderly resort because women smoked there. Oh, these police, thought Mary. And her palms, always nail-nipped now, felt again the tense clenching.

Two or three men and a girl were in the little basement room. One Mary knew. He was Leon, thrown out of the army as a drug addict. The only drug addict Mary had ever known.

"Hello, what are you doing?"

"I've been walking."

"Good, sit down and have some coffee, then I'll walk with you too."

Mary drank the large cup of coffee. It was her seventh that day.

"I've just finished a new poem."

"Yes?" Mary's poetry was the revolution.

"I think it is the greatest I've ever written."

"What is it about?"

"What is any poem ever about? How can one say this poem is about love or that about beauty or that about nature? Who can say what the fourth dimension is about? Browning was a hell of a poet but he said one right thing. He said that poetry was trying to put the infinite into the finite. And you ask me what a poem is about."

"But if I should write a poem today it would be about one definite thing, I know."

"What?"

"It would be about the revolutionary movement."

"Christ!"

"Well, that is the greatest and most beautiful thing in the world today."

"Come on, let's get out of this stuffy dump and I'll tell you what I think of the revolution."

Leon walked as though he were striding from star to star. With his head thrown back and his eyes deep in his white face, he looked a poet. A man who drugged himself. De

Quincey and Coleridge. Mary thrilled to the thought. Leon, too, was outside the pale. A rebel in his own right.

"It's the old story of art versus propaganda," Leon was saying. "Now, I'm telling you that art is eternal. There will be this Karl Marx revolution of yours and there will be other revolutions just as in the past there have been all kinds of revolution. But art is always the same. There was Spartacus but there was Vergil. There will always be art. Revolutions come and go."

Oh, that she should be listening to a conversation of this sort. Mary thought of her peacefully snoring family. If they knew she was out under the stars talking of art and revolution with a man in whose veins cocaine ran fire.

"But what is art when the people hardly know of its existence? It just doesn't exist for most of the people in the world today. That's why I'm for the revolution. So the people won't be cheated any longer of beauty. Do you know the socialist song? 'Give us bread but give us roses too?'"

"All very fine. But you do see any of that crowd from the Socialist party rushing around to the art museums?"

"Perhaps not to the art museums. But they certainly go to concerts more than most. And until I joined the Socialist party I had never heard of any bootmakers or cigar workers who read Anatole France and Tolstoy."

"Well, have it your own way. But I'm going to stick to my poems while you and your art-loving comrades are out making revolutions."

The sky was pale when Mary left Leon. She had had an exciting day and had walked the whole night but, tired as she was, she could not stop. These were days when it seemed she could never keep still. When she must always be going, running even, to serve the revolution. She grudged the time to

dress, to eat, to sleep. Most of her meals were coffee and a sandwich gulped in some quick lunch place. There was the revolution. Time must not be wasted. There were meetings to attend, party records to help keep, magazines to be sold, circulars to be addressed, funds to be raised. The revolution was at the most five years away but if it was to come Mary must not be idle.

She was nineteen. She would be twenty-four when the final battle between the working class and the employing class would end once and for all proletarian slavery. She hoped she would have a chance to prove her devotion then to the revolution. She knew lots of the people in the headquarters thought of her as bourgeois. Oh, for some great moment when perhaps she could even die to prove to the world that the great change was all she lived for.

So Mary walked the rest of the paling night and instead of going home finally took a room in the Y. W. C. A. from which she could later phone her family that she had spent the night with friends.

The red-haired woman left Boston the next day to go back to New York. But the other speaker, the black-haired man, remained. The Russian branch of the Socialist party had asked him to remain in Boston to undertake a series of classes in advanced socialist theory. Some of the other nationalities in the Boston organization as a whole were not very enthusiastic about him. But since the revolution in Russia, the Russian branch had more or less dictated the policies of the Socialist party and it was arranged that the visitor should teach his classes in the main headquarters.

Mary did not attend the classes. She was too busy with the secretarial work which she had volunteered to do for the party. Besides she was trying to help a union of boot and shoe

workers get organized. She did not see much of the black-haired man. She heard that he had asked why such a bourgeois child should have been given so much important work to do, and it made her a little cross and that was all.

One night, after she had spent several hours collecting dues from the party members, stamping their red cards and entering the amounts in a big ledger, Mary went into the back room. The class of the black-haired man was over. A few of his pupils still remained but he himself sat alone pedalling idly at the mechanical piano and humming the tune.

As Mary came in he looked around at her. She said good evening and joined some of the comrades in their conversation. She noticed that the black-haired man kept looking at her. Once when she looked back she felt self-conscious. A certain tension grew between them. To break it Mary went over and spoke to him.

"It's too bad that we haven't better rolls for that piano," she said, "but we need the money for so many other more important things. Anyway the piano is not much good. Do you like mechanical pianos? I don't."

"I think they are an abomination. I curse myself everytime I pedal out a new screech on this one."

"Abomination" was not the sort of word used around the Socialist party headquarters very much. Mary had heard the black-haired man use the complex words that went with orthodox Marxian theory — they were a sort of esoteric slang — but she had not expected to hear him use a word which she associated with her bourgeois family and friends. He had called her a bourgeois child.

Mary lingered by the piano. The black-haired man went on pedalling, swaying from side to side as he did so. When one roll was finished he took it out and put in another. He

had played perhaps half a dozen of the perforated strips of paper when Mary turned to go.

"Good-night, comrade," she said.

"Leaving?"

"Yes, it is time I was going home. I have been here since early afternoon."

"I should be getting along, too. In what direction do you go?"

"Dorchester."

"And I am staying with comrades in Roxbury. So part of our way lies together. Just a minute, till I get my hat."

Mary did not know whether she wanted him to escort her or not. She liked the trips home alone from the headquarters. The walk down the quiet street to the elevated station, the ride in the empty train, the change to a trolley and finally the sweeter, fresher air of the suburban street on which she lived.

She could hardly refuse to let him accompany her, however. She was silent as they left the headquarters. They went toward the elevated station. At the foot of the stairs, the black-haired man said. "It's too fine an evening to get into an old rattletrap of a car. Let's walk, what do you say?"

"All right."

They walked quickly, not saying a word, for the first mile.

"You are a funny child," Mary heard the man's words crash the silence. She did not answer.

"What made you join the Socialist Party?"

"Beauty."

Mary expected him to laugh. She could tell the flaming woman speaker that, but imagine saying it to Henderson, the cigar-worker, or Bixby, the boot and shoe man, or to this man who bitterly denounced what he called bourgeois ideology.

He did not laugh. He only said, "Beauty? Yes?"

"Yes. Beauty. Sunsets. Paintings. Music. Hills at night. Light in stained glass windows. All the lovely, lovely things the people are robbed of, blinded so that they cannot see." Mary's voice was a little hysterical. "To give the people through freedom and leisure the beauty they have always been denied. That's why I'm a Socialist."

"And what have you been denied?"

"I? Why —"

"But you have been denied something. No one is so rebellious simply over what has been denied other people. Surely you know your economic determinism and class-consciousness better than that. What have you been denied? Love, perhaps?"

"Love? I have no time for love now. Later it may come. But now I must give all my time to the party. Love is a lesser interest."

"Yes?"

He almost lisped the word, Mary thought.

"A revolutionist has no time for sentimentality."

"Supposing that I were to tell you that I was in love with you?"

"But you're not. You scarcely know me. Anyway it wouldn't make any difference."

"Supposing I was to tell you that I have watched a funny little child with blue eyes and yellow hair working away at a desk ten times too big for her and thought to myself I would rather be kissing the tips of her fingers than see them pecking away at that typewriter on accounts and circulars."

Mary did not answer.

"I love you."

"But how can you? How can you? You don't know me."

"I love you."

Mary looked far down the shadowed avenue to where the last of a long row of street lights starred the darkness.

No one had told her that before. Of course there had been boys at the university and little things had happened out canoeing or walking in the woods. This, though, was a grown man saying he loved her. A stranger who scarcely knew her really. Should she believe him? Or was he teasing her? His voice had a strange shaking in it when he said the words.

"Well?"

"I don't believe you."

"But if you did believe me?"

"It wouldn't make any difference. I've never thought of you in that way."

"Suppose you think of me that way over night, then, and see how it seems. Perhaps you'll meet me for luncheon tomorrow and tell me, will you?"

There was a whimsical patronage in his voice that Mary did not like. She would not meet him for luncheon, she decided.

Instead of stopping off at his own section of town, the black-haired man accompanied Mary all the way to her door. The other comrades were more free and easy in leaving her to go her own way at night and Mary wished the black-haired man had done the same. As always when anything happened she wanted to be alone to think.

Again she did not sleep that night. This wakefulness though was different from that which had kept her rising from bed to watch the stars and think of the time they would shine on a world freed by revolution. What if he did love her? And if

she loved him? What was love anyway? What had it all to do with the revolution? . . .

"I did not know you felt it as much as that."

Mary and the black-haired man were sitting together on a park bench. He had a letter from her in his hand. It was the first letter she had written him. It was the first love letter she had ever written anybody. In it she had said that love flowing into one's heart was like light pouring through the gold and blue of stained glass windows setting afire cold cathedral shadows. In it she said that all her life she had stood alone, yearning for comradeship, for the feeling that there were others in the world who cared for the same things as herself.

"It is the most beautiful thing I have ever read," said the black-haired man.

Mary was silent.

"And so you have decided to give up your secretaryship of the party and come to New York with me? And what about your trip to Russia next Spring?"

"Russia can wait. All those things can wait. It's only I that cannot wait. I and my love for you."

DIRGE

by

Eugene Jolas

It is the world of eternal night, thinks Jean Silvius. Charlemagne. Auerochs. Merovingian hatchets. Arioste. Ten billion years emerge with wail and whine. Shifting of substantives. Idols on rocks. Mourning dance.

The organ weeps the *Dies Irae.*

Jean stamps into a fable. There had been love, there had been drunkenness, there had been chaos. Not much with which to grow hopeful, or with which to storm a few more years. He x-rays the past six months. A dump-heap. Broken casseroles. Lizards. Letters smeared with dung. Weeds. Safety-razor blades. And in ashes lies the broken verse.

This is the nave of a Gothic church. Bats are in the organ-loft. St. Anthony smiles in the stained-glass window.

A catafalque wreathed with dripping candles stands in front of the altar. Jean's father lies beneath the dark draperies and the autumn flowers, his hands folded over his breast, his face a waxen mask.

White ribbons: To our Beloved Father. To my Beloved Husband. R. I. P. The City Club.

Jean flees towards his frontiers. Oasis of his balsam. I have not found much song, he muses. We shrink from death. There

is a smoke of incense now. This is a drug. He looks around. Dwarfs and witches.

The church is filled to the last pew. Enemies and friends are there, they try to hide many conflicts, umbrellas drip onto the wooden floor.

• • •

The morning oozes into tedium.

The street nods and yawns.

In the Golden Eagle bar-room four men sit around a table. Thick tobacco-smoke wambles through the room. An electric piano grunts the latest hit. Ida—lovely Ida—I love to sit beside her —

— They finally killed Rohrer's shepherd dog, says Martin Kerner, the lock-smith.

— What for? asks Albert Gallina, the saloonkeeper.

— The animal was running around the woods a couple of days ago. A hunter happened to be about and took a whack at him. Tore its whole left shoulder off, says Kerner.

— Serves Rohrer right, says Paul Johst, the butcher. Had no business in the woods. There won't be a jack-rabbit left if that keeps up.

— Well, continues Kerner, they took the brute home. It lived ten hours longer. Bibbering all the time. The neighbours were sick over it. That last howl was something awful. They had to take a knife to kill the beast off.

Another round of beer.

— That Malakoff girl died last night, says Gallina.

— Hard on Joe, says Johst. Lots of trouble in that family.

— Yes, says Gallina. Died, so they say, of hemorrage of the brain. Seems her fiancé came to see her the other night. She was all ready for the wedding and so on. And the louse tells

her he can't go on with it. The girl went to her room and they found her there a couple of hours later, dead as a door-nail.

— Call that hemorrage of the brain, if you want to, says Johst. I guess the police'll find another name for it.

A long silence. Then someone puts a coin in the electric piano: I-da, love-ly I-da. . . .

Jean-Baptiste Binding tells a new story.

— And the wife says to the fellow, Please don't be untrue to me in the big city. And the fellow says, Wait a minute, and ties a knot in his handkerchief.

Laughter.

Thomas Mecker, secretary to the Chief of Police spits across the room. He says:

— And then that woman followed the guy to his house, he threw her out, but she came back, and so he finally took her to his room. And what d'ye think the bitch does? She undresses herself and then kneels down in the room and starts to praying the rosary.

They chuckle in unison.

• • •

Jean faces a new substantiality. *Mors stupebit et natura.* He tries to silhouette it, it escapes his definitions, this is something he has never known.

A few days before he had stood near the bed in which his father lay dying. Jean had been conceived in this bed. He had been born in this bed. His mother would sleep in it again tonight.

Thou shalt honor thy Father and thy Mother. Intransigeance of his struggles.

All night long they had knelt at his father's bed-side. A neighbour recited the prayers for the dying. The brothers an-

swered in confused syllables. His mother and sister shook with sobs.

Jean watched his father's stertorous breathing. His face was sallow. His lips were twitching. From time to time he would wake up from his slumber and mumble something. A child's stammering. Sighs of pain.

Suddenly he rose half way from his pillow. His eyes looked into space. Perspiration was on his forehead. Dear Heart of Jesus, he murmured, have mercy! Dear, Dear Heart, have mercy! .... In the end he almost screamed it, it became a wheeze. He relapsed once more into semi-consciousness

During the night one of his sons who lived in another town arrived. He knelt before the dying man and called his name.

Father opened his eyes and tried to put out his hand. He had recognized the voice and a faint smile went over his face. Dawn saw his last convulsive struggle.

• • •

At school, Joseph Marcs, the teacher, tells his pupils the legend of Mundavia.

— In the days before history began, Druids lived in Mundavia and on nights of the first moon, they killed animals and predicted the future from their warm entrails.

— The country was fertile, and the inhabitants lived in peace with their gods and their soil.

— Then enemies came from two neighbouring countries and invaded Mundavia. A bitter war ensued It lasted many years. One of the neighbours won. The defeated tribe brooded revenge.

— Many centuries went by. There was a new invasion. Another conqueror ruled Mundavia.

— But the misdeeds of the oppressor at last aroused the wrath of the Mundavians.

— One day, while the Governor of the usurping nation rode through the streets of the capital, a handful of patriots stopped him and stabbed him to death.

— This was the signal for a general uprising. The invader was driven out with fire and sword. Mundavia was free at last.

• • •

The funeral *cortège* winds its way through the main portal of the church. Father Maura looks at him as he passes by. Jean feels compassion in the priest's eyes.

The clank of the funeral bell shudders over the gables. There is the forest near the castle. Something wells up in him now with a song and a rhyme.

Jean had gone walking with his father through the autumnal forest It was evening, the trees flamed in a shimmer of gold and aluminum, the moon was in her first quarter. The music of the leaves under their feet flittered like a major chord.

They had been talking of many things. Of God and death. Of his childhood's questioning moments. Of far countries. Of his studies. Of love. They had stopped in the wilderness of the park. The ancient castle, deserted for many years, lay in the evening sun, a stair overgrown with moss led to the lake, the *burghof* echoed with the plash of a fountain.

Father sat down on a bench, his head in his hand. Then he drew Jean to him and looked at him. He recited an old folk-song of the region. *There were once four black brothers who walked through the wood.* A song of death. A darkling melody of shriven trees.

How often since, that scene had come back to him! In foreign countries he had carried with him the echo of those lines.

The witchery of the rhyme. The sense of sadness that was in his father's voice.

They had stayed in the wood a long time. Lights began to gleam in the town below. The belfry of the church was white underneath the moon.

I loved my father then, he muses. The thought follows him down the street, flies into the latin chant, sinks back into his mind. But why was there this war between us? This no-man's land? A shock of wills through many years.

And yet that silver night filled with planetary words!

• • •

At St. Paul's hospital they are busy. It's Dr. Ender's fifth major operation this week.

Theo Dillen is on the operating table. He inhales the bitter-sweet smell of the anaesthetic.

— Mama, he cries from time to time, there they come with those bayonets again. Mama, oh Mama . . . Then lies very quiet — like a child that has fallen asleep.

— Those bloody swine, says Dr. Ender, as he wrenches out of the open wound a swathe of bandage which a hurried war surgeon had left there. Those bloody swine.

Suddenly the nurse speaks:

— Doctor, the patient isn't breathing.

Dr. Ender feels his pulse.

— It's all over. Eleven operations. The bloody swine.

• • •

As Jean walks down the street behind the hearse containing his father's remains, he is aware of many reliquies. Totem.

The plumed horses spurt steam through their nostrils. The funeral bell wrangles gloom over the town. He listens to the

loud and monotonous praying of the rosary by the women in the *cortège*. The men, in top-hats and frock-coats, stare in front of them, occasionally exchange furtive dialogues, march in step with military automatism.

His brothers walking beside him look sullen. Michel whispers with Armand. Husky truisms. Relatives mimick sorrow. Jean anatomizes the minds around him. His sisters-in-law hide their indifference behind the hypocrisy of their veils. The men chew the barbaric brogue of their *clichés*. Gibberish of cant.

There is André Retz, dusty and old-fashioned in his shiny swallow-tailed coat. Jean remembers a certain day when the town had been shaken to its depths by the news that Retz, a member of the municipal council, had been arrested for raping a minor. He had served three years for the offence. But people forget so easily. Here he is again, shabbily respectable, lechery in his eyes.

And there goes Raoul Monner. He had hated Father to the end. He had been a militarist, proud of his uniform. When the new regime came, he changed without much difficulty. Now he still puts on his uniform at home, he parades up and down the room in front of a mirror, a mildewed album is in his heart.

And Mayr and Grunig and Bell and Leroux — how proudly they walk there! Jean dissects their attitudes. They had long ago amputated the moods and tenses of their ancestors. Loons of God! And Madame Monner fussing with the bureaucracy of her hat!

They trot down the street, the liars and the usurers, the pharisees and the calumniators, behind the cross and the litany, behind the candid grief.

• • •

The *cortège* passes the parental house.

Six months ago, one evening in May, Jean had come home, ten years had stood between him and his *Heimweh*, he had found shelter from the cyclone of the foreign cities. A toll of his bruised heart.

Now, as the procession trips past the shuttered windows, Jean is once more in the catacombs of the last few months. The sting. The scourge. The blunders. The fraud. The catastrophe.

Two of his brothers had married. Little burgher wives. One of the brothers had taken over his father's business. Almost at once decay set in. Calumnies spread. Hatred flamed up like a prairie fire. The family's Gothic arch collapsed.

Then there came the black hour of devastation. The little business went under the hammer.

Jean relives the day he had sat with Father a few weeks back. Downstairs the auction was going on. The crowd had gathered in front of the house. Silence brooded while the official called out the articles. The cyphers screamed in interludes.

Three days Father had sat upstairs listening to the voices below. He had attacks of faintness.

— God damn 'em all, he had said.

— This will kill him, Mother had cried.

Jean sees all the men and women who are accompanying his father on his last journey. Among them are several who had quarelled with him, some who had calumniated him, many who had been at the auction. This is their last triumph. Paeon of their arcadia.

It is raining in the street.

The plague marches with the mourners.

• • •

My father is dead. Jean repeats it over and over again. The ritual of the phrase obsesses him.

What is death? Sleep? A greater dream? He ponders the question. Spirit and matter are inseparable. Spirit is also in plants and animals and stars, in all the depths and heights of nature.

Confusedly listening to the latin chants in front of him, he feels excited by the janus-like figure of the paralellism: The physical and the spiritual are one. Of that he is sure. In the world of molecules and atoms it continues its inexorable course. Leibnitz and his monod? But, he wonders, what of the entire cosmic system? Life is not a mere chemical process.

Death does not end it all. He feels certain of this. Even the destruction of the brain does not prevent the continuation of the living activity. Here is the timeless and spaceless. Limitless night of the all. There will be a magnificent adjustment of the spirit after death. We do survive, he jubilates, and this faith exalts him.

He bites himself into the thought of another world. He calls his father. Why does he not hear him? He smiles at his own confusion.

I have so much to tell you yet, he says. Do you remember when I left you alone in that city, it is so long ago, and at night you found me in a bar-room, I was drunk and threw insulting words into your face. You looked very pale, as you came through that door. And yet I was so afraid of you.

He had came home from America. Father had looked at him with breaking eyes. Life was the whispering of an oak tree cleft by lightning.

Warfare had been between them. Even during these six months Jean now remembers living in fear of his invalid father. All his life had been fear. A kind of obsession.

He plunges into the feeling of the notion. It races along with him. It becomes huge and lucid. It hovers over him with leching eyes. I am free, he cries to himself. Some day, when we shall see each other again — O, wonder world of the possible — I shall walk up to you and look you in the eye, and feel my tremendous triumph!

• • •

There is the open grave. The mourners file by. Sonorous phrases. Chimeras of the emotion. Atrophied vocables. They hem and haw. They neigh and bark. They croak and bleat. They chirp and hum. It is a whine of rusty throats.

And suddenly something comes over Jean. Something that is his emancipation. Suppose, he says, I should speak here at the grave, suppose I should vomit my loathing, suppose I should open my heart and yawp my abominations. I would say:

— Citizens:

— You have come here to pay honor to the memory of a man. You have left your little businesses in order to follow an ancient rite that no longer has its primal meaning.

— You have carried with you to this place the cadavers of your minds, you have brought here the distorted puppets of your imagination, you have trailed with you the fluffy singsong of your crisis.

— You do not understand that you stand now in the anteroom to a world where the miraculous is the quotidian.

— You do not understand that the body of this man is a word that can never decay.

— You do not understand that I called this man, in fear and wonder, across a rain-sprayed river.

— You do not understand that I defend him against the maggoty thoughts festering in your brains.

— You do not understand that I can see into the sewers of your minds through which flows the shite of your thoughts.

— You do not understand that faith is over this grave, that a great flowering will come in Spring, that there will be an incantation in the cypress trees.

— Citizens.

— I throw back into your mouths the horror of your darkness.

• • •

The coffin is lowered into the drenched earth.

Back to the primal mood, thinks Jean. Dark epochs of slime. Flower and bird. So many stars in terciary rotations. Wonder night of the great monsoon. Lost Atlantis. Odin and Zeus.

A moment comes, sob and flutter of crows. Black suits and dresses slink by. Eyes grow huge.

He looks again. Through sheen of rain. Through flight of ribbon.

Monner has changed into a roach. Mayr is a cat. Retz is a dog. Maury is a centipede. Madame Monner is a pelican. Grunig is a spider. Bell is a rat. Leroux is a rabbit. Magog is a rooster.

Behind them, jackals stare into the clod and gravel.

He looks at the tomb-stone. There is a blur of names *Ci-gît* . . . . Centuries go by on inky wings.

• • •

APPENDIX–STORY–1931

GEORG BALINT is stage and book critic of "Az Est," Budapest, and the literary review "Nyuzat" (Occident); author of a book of free verse, "Strofale" and numerous poems and short stories in Hungarian and German papers. His lecture on Sinclair Lewis was later printed in "Toll" (Pen), and he translated Elmer Rice's "Adding Machine" for the Hungarian stage. He was born in Budapest in 1906.

KAY BOYLE is the author of the recent novel "Plagued By The Nightingale," a collection of short stories "Wedding Day," and numerous exceptional short stories in the little magazines of Europe and America. Her "Rest Cure" from STORY No. 1 is included in the Best Short Stories of 1931. Later work has appeared in Harper's, Scribner's, etc. She lives in Southern France where she is now completing a novel which has been in progress for the last seven years.

BESSIE BREUER is an American woman writer, the wife of Henry Varnum Poor, painter and potter, and is now residing near New York City. Bessie Breuer was for some years a newspaper woman and besides in STORY has recently appeared in Harper's. Another Breuer story, with a Balkan background, will appear soon in STORY.

WHIT BURNETT is Southeastern European correspondent for the New York Sun Foreign Service, living in Vienna. He is the author of short stories in the old Smart Set, transition, New Masses, etc., and "A Day In The Country" (STORY No. 1) is included in the Best Short Stories of 1931, and "Two Men Free" (transition) in the Best Short Stories of 1930 has been translated into Russian and German. "Sherrel" (STORY No. 2) is mentioned in "The Advance of the American Short Story." He was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 14, 1899, attended the University of Utah and the University of California and has been in newspaper work in Europe and America off and on for fifteen years.

HELENA CLAYTON has translated several short stories by Zochtchenko and Panteleimon Romanoff with a view to later book publication. She is the wife of John Clayton, former Chicago Tribune correspondent in Europe and now connected with the Chicago Opera Company. Helene Clayton is an Estonian by birth, witnessed the outbreak of the 1917 revolution in Moscow when a student at the Commercial Institute, spent the first year after in a small town under the Viatka Government, but escaped in the Fall of 1918 to Estonia where she joined the Estonian Foreign Office. She now lives in Chicago. Another Zochtchenko translation will appear in a later number of STORY.

ERNST DECSEY, pupil and biographer of Anton Bruckner, is music critic of the Vienna Tagblatt, and has just published a new biography of Maria Jeritza.

JAY DRATLER was born in New York in 1910 and is now living in Paris. He was assistant editor of the Carolina Magazine and later associate editor at the University of North Carolina of The Agora. He has just finished his first novel.

JAMES T. FARRELL is a native of Chicago and is twenty-seven years old. He was educated in the Chicago parochial and Catholic high schools and at the University of Chicago studied law and social sciences in which he won a scholarship. "I have," he writes, "done considerable bumming, and have worked as a clerk, filling station attendant, reporter and once had a nondescript job in an undertaking establishment in which a friend and myself were considered as one man and received between us three dollars a week and a bed for hanging around there in the evenings." He has written for most of the modern small magazines. His first novel, "Young Lonigan" will be published next Spring by Vanguard, and he is now working on a volume of short stories as well as a second novel for Vanguard, "Madhouse," treating a department of a large corporation as the protagonist and the people in it as functions of this machine. He is now living in France, but is not an expatriate. "My sympathies are almost wholly left wing, and I subscribe to no Parisian literary credoes or movements."

MARTHA FOLEY is a Bostonian by birth and studied at Boston University. Once active in American feminist and labor movements as soap-boxer and hunger-striker, etc. A newspaperwoman who has been on staffs in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Paris, at present a correspondent in Vienna. Has contributed to magazines in the United States and Europe, including transition, the American Mercury, New Masses, etc. Author of "One with Shakespeare" in The Best Short Stories of 1931, and "Samarkand" in American Writers Abroad.

OLIVER GOSSMAN was born in Glasgow, 1885; hometown, Gourock on the Firth of Clyde. Married to Hedy Verena. Has published in Manchester Guardian, New Leader, London Mercury, Blackwood's Magazine, and STORY; from the latter (No. 1) "Penny Whistle" has been reprinted in the Best Short Stories (English) of 1931. Vienna correspondent of the Daily Record, Glasgow. Thinks his "Dan Tyre" the best short story ever written about Gourock Pier. Believes in the Spanish proverb: "Rather than suffer his art to grow stale, the Devil he chivies the flies with his tail."

EUGENE JOLAS was born in New Jersey but spent his childhood in Lorraine, the son of a German mother and a French father. He writes in three languages, and translated this year "into the American" the work of Alfred Doblin, "Alexanderplatz, Berlin" (Viking) has just finished a novel in French and is completing another in English. He was the founder and for several years editor of "transition," and is for the moment living in Austria.

CARTER BROOKE JONES is an American newspaperman working in Atlanta, Ga. He wrote for the old Smart Set and has later appeared in the American Mercury.

IRA V. MORRIS was born in Chicago, Nov. 11, 1903 and educated at Harvard, class of 1925, and Heidelberg University. After a few months on a newspaper in America he went into publishing and worked at this for three years in London, but left office work to write. He has been living in France for the last year and a half, where he is finishing a novel. He has been represented in O'Brien's Best American Short Stories.

ROBERT MUSIL is a former Austrian army officer, whose novel, "The Man Without Qualities" is considered the best representation of the Austrian "geist" thus far. He lives in Vienna.

G. E. NOXON was born in Toronto, Canada, and attended Trinity College, Cambridge, and the Sorbonne; publishing editor "Experiment," Cambridge 1928–1931; made films including soundfilm, "Cambridge" for British International 1931, and is at present editor of the English Edition of the International Review of Educational Cinema, Rome. His published work includes various articles on cinematic theory, poetry, and short stories.

PETER NEAGOÉ was born in Transylvania 42 years ago of Roumanian parents, and although coming of a line of intellectuals, his sympathies have always been with the peasants among whom he passed his vacations in childhood, living the life of a rugged mountaineer with the Carpathian Shepherds. He began a writing career at an early age when having written the love letters for the servant girls in his home he became the scribe of the neighborhood servants. He studied philosophy at the University and painting at the Fine Arts School in Bucarest and at 21 went to American where he became a naturalized citizen. He now lives in France. He speaks five languages fluently but says he thinks best in English, "a strong, virile tongue." He has just completed a novel "Ileana, The Possessed," which concerns Transylvanian peasant life, and is the editor of a current volume, "Anthology of American Writers Abroad."

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN is a native of Boston, and now is a resident of Oxford, England, where he edits annually "The Best Short Stories" (American) and (English.) In addition to his usual annuals he is issuing this winter a new version of "The Advance of the American Short Story" from its early separation from the essay (with Washington Irving) to the "new generation" which includes some of the writers for STORY. He is also bringing out a selection of his own selections, "Modern American Short Stories" from 1914 to 1931, and is at the moment deep in a work on Nietzsche. His work "The Dance of the Machines" is a remarkable criticism of America and the mechanistic structure of life and ideas as exemplified, among other expressions, by the machinemade short story. A friend of all new ventures attempting to break with a facile and sterile mechanizing of life, Mr. O'Brien has encouraged numerous young writers, many of whom are now nationally known. From the first (mimeographed) number of STORY he selected four short stories for inclusion in the "Best Short Stories Of 1931," a record in 15 years for any single issue of an American magazine.

HJALMAR SOEDERBERG is o[illegible] of the leading Swedish novelists and short story writers.

EGBERT SWENSON, who has translated several stories and two novels from the Swedish, is a European correspondent of the Chicago Tribune.

FRITZ VON UNRUH was born at Coblenz in 1885 and before the war was officer of the guard of the Crown Prince and later of the guard of Kaiser Wilhelm II. In 1911 he wrote "Officers," and 1913 "Prince Louis-Ferdinand." The battle of Verdun transformed the object of his certitude and his book "Verdun, The Sacrifice" was the first war book of pacifist tendencies, preceding "Le Feu" of Barbusse. He has written several books and some plays, of which the latest "Phaea," a poet's scourge of the talkies, is now playing at the Deutsches Volks-Theatre in Vienna and is billed at the Theatre Guild in New York.

LAURENCE VAIL is an American citizen, born in Paris in 1891 and lives mostly in France, England or Italy. Oxford graduate, 1913. Has written for Broom, transition, International, Poetry, Provincetown Players, Dial, old Smart Set, etc.; is publishing a novel, this fall, "Murder, Murder" Peter Davis, London. He is the translator of Clemenceau's Life of Mme. Roland and is at work on other translations now at his home on the French Riviera. Mr. Vail, in his literary silences, has been a painter, decorator and material designer.

JOSÉ GARCIA VILLA is a Filipino, born in Manila, and came to America in 1930. He is the son of a physician and was educated in English, and began writing rather recently, only after reading Willa Cather's "A Lost Lady." He is at present at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico . . . "not for love of college, but for parental satisfaction . . . I was suspended from the University of the Philippines for writing 'immoral' poetry, although the head of the English department, now dean of the college of arts and sciences, U. of N. M., thought otherwise, and invited me to study in this university." Mr. Villa's

first love was painting. In the Philippines he won the prize every year since 1927 for the best short story of the year and his work has won high praise from O'Brien, Sherwood Anderson and others. Other stories of his are to appear soon in Scribner's, The Frontier, This Quarter, and STORY.

LEO L. WARD was born January 6, 1898 at Otterbein, Indiana, and was educated at the University of Notre Dame. Ordained as Catholic priest four years ago. Taught at Notre Dame for three years. At Oxford the past year. Now teaching in English department at Notre Dame. Has had verse published in a few magazines, Poetry, and the Commonweal, and several stories in the Midland.

ROMER WILSON was born in Sheffield, England, December 26, 1891 and died at Lausanne, January 11, 1930. She wrote eight novels, "Martin Schuler," "If All These Young Men," „The Death of Society," "The Grand Tour," „Dragon's Blood," "Greenlow," "Latterday Symphony," and "Once in May," a play, "The Social Climbers," a volume of short stories, "Tender Advice," a volume of poems. "Prester Pohn," and a life of Emily Brontë, "All Alone."

MIKHAIL ZOCHTCHENKO was born in Poltava in 1895 the son of a painter and a descendant of an old noble family and is today one of the most read Russian writers. In 1915 he was a volunteer soldier and was wounded and gassed. He was a captain. In 1918 he became a volunteer in the Red Army, but since 1921, again a civilian, he has occupied himself with writing. His stories, sharp, short and invariably slightly bitter, are among the new classics of post-revolutionary Russian literature.

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